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Magazine - Australia

NOVEMBER ISSUE 2010
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The studio behind Borderlands
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The official verdict on this year's
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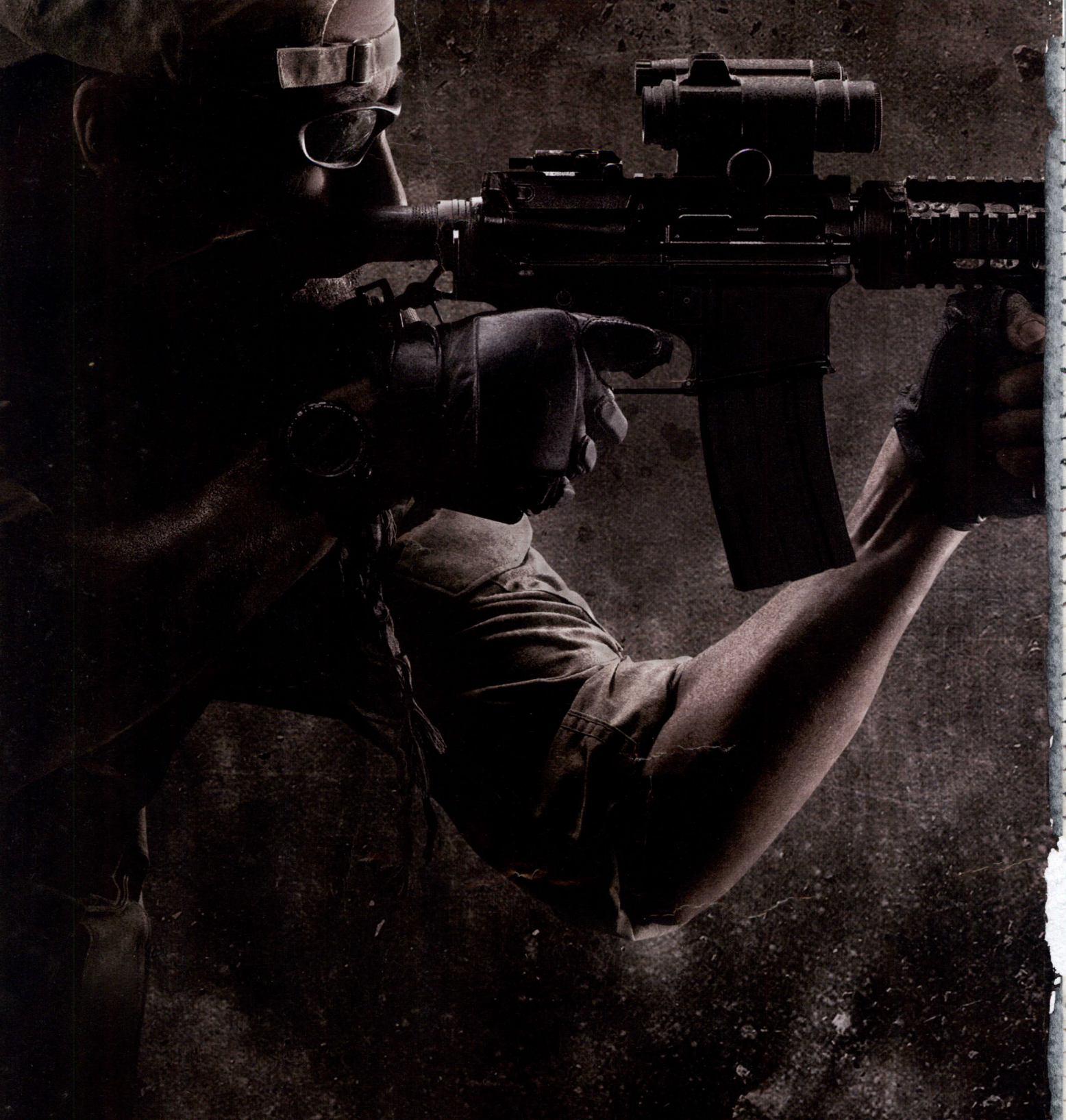
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BUILDING BLOCKBUSTERS: WHAT DRIVES THE BEST MINDS IN THE BUSINESS?



WIELD THE POWER OF BIG ARMY



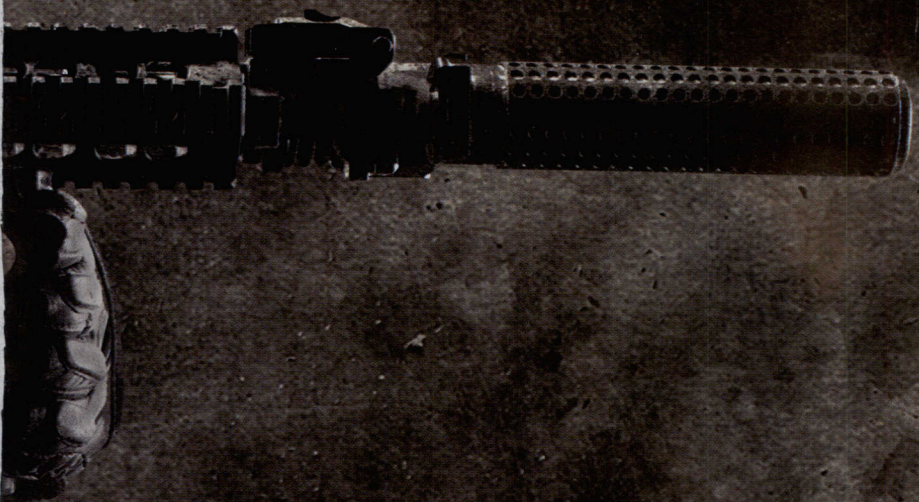
DOMINATE DICE MULTIPLAYER



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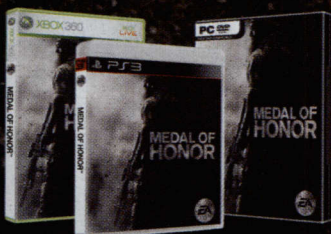
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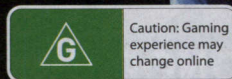
DICE



NO MATTER HOW MANY WE NUMBER

WE ARE 11

Whether we be one, three, five or nine we play eleven strong. We celebrate as a team. We dress as a team. We own our friends, neighbours and bitter rivals, as a team. We dare you to deny that We Are Eleven.



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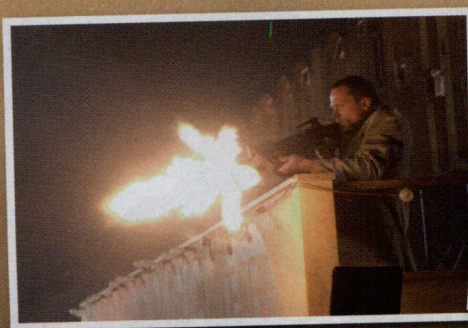




PARADISE FALLS

LEGION

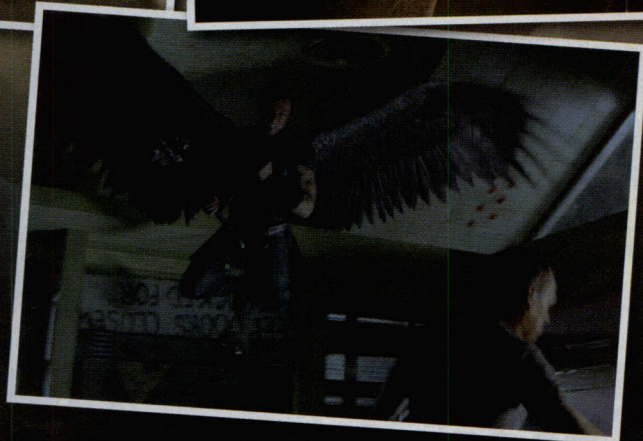
When the last angel falls, the fight for mankind begins.



A remote desert truck stop becomes the battleground where the fate of the world will be decided. Evil's armies are amassing. Armed and united by the Archangel Michael (PAUL BETTANY), a group of strangers become unwitting soldiers on the frontlines of the Apocalypse. Their mission: protect a waitress, Charlie (ADRIANNE PALICKI) and her sacred unborn child from the relentless, bloody siege of God's demonic angels in **LEGION**, also starring DENNIS QU Aid, TYRESE GIBSON and LUCAS BLACK.

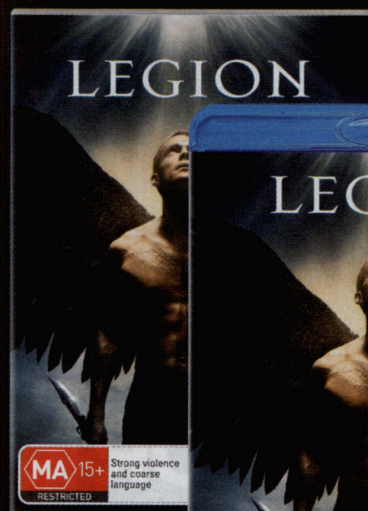
As Charlie takes an order from an old lady, the phones and television die. Then things get very weird as the pensioner develops superhuman strength, attacking one of the customers, and a swarm of insects turn the diner into the only safe place in the desert. The visual arts mastermind behind *Iron*

Man and *Blade Runner*, Scott Stewart, makes his director's debut in this terrifying vision of the end of the world.



“The story **really** has resonance... it's very entertaining and a great action movie”

DENNIS QU Aid



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BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

Two Face shows both of his mugs in the Dark Knight's upcoming smash. Check it out on page 40

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GRAN TURISMO 5

It's a few, long weeks until The Game We're All Anticipating lands. Read all about it on page 52

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The zombies are revolting – so it's up to you to put 'em down!



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The Australian-made gem that's totally ruling every minute of our spare time!

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PS3



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PlayStation® Official Magazine - Australia

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Distributed by Network Services Company in Australia and Netlink in NZ.

Printed by CaxtonWeb Pty Ltd.

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SHOUT OUTS: KJR :: Vinnie :: Nicole :: Luke Mathew :: Lucy :: MJ :: Mackie Manor :: Dika :: BHS Class of 2000 :: Bec Waddy :: Cam Jenkins



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Capt_Flashheart



PLAYING:

MEDAL OF HONOR



WANTING:

GRAN TURISMO 5

WELCOME!

Two very different schools of thought have emerged in the pre-owned games debate.

On the one hand we have THQ's *WWE* creative director Cory Ledesma admitting to CVG: "I don't think we really care whether used game buyers are upset because new game buyers get everything. So if used game buyers are upset they don't get the online feature set I don't really have much sympathy for them."

On the other we have Treyarch boss Mark Lamia, who believes post-release support is a better alternative than one-time-use download codes to dissuade pre-owned sales.

"I want to take that in the other direction and bring consumers really great reasons to keep their games, rather than trade them in," Lamia told UK site MCV.

There's merit to both sides of the argument in this ongoing debate, but the key thing I think games publishers often *don't* remember is that counting every used game sold as a lost \$100 is folly. People don't buy used games because they prefer the subtle scent of somebody else's house embedded in the manual; they buy them because they are cheaper. It's presumptuous to assume that everyone can afford to drop a ton on every decent game they want to try out.

At least they're buying *something*. Perhaps that used game sale will encourage a new game sale later on, in the shape of a sequel of something else from the same developer. Perhaps it'll trigger some positive word-of-mouth amongst a group of peers that can again turn into future sales.

Perhaps it won't do any of this.

The alternative, however, is no used-game market and houses across the country full of games that nobody will ever play again.

Whe Reilly

OPS ON: MONEY SAVING TIPS



STEPHANIE GOH
ART DIRECTOR

Stay home, play games. Sure, it might damage your social life somewhat but when you're loaded you can venture back outside.

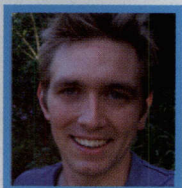
PSN: TBA

PLAYING:

Sports Champions

WANTING:

Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One



PAUL TAYLOR
DEPUTY EDITOR

You're reading it. Approach anything lower than '6' with extreme caution, and anything lower than '4' with extreme disregard. We'll keep you right.

PSN: paulgusta

PLAYING:

WRC

WANTING:

Vanquish



ADAM MATHEW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Don't shave. Have you seen the price of razors these days? What, are they gold-plated or something? Look at all you clean-shaven high-rollers.

PSN: YoumumsAWESOME

PLAYING:

Medal of Honor

WANTING:

Gran Turismo 5



JAMES COTTEE
CONTRIBUTOR

By attending three press conferences a day, I have no food budget. Sure, I eat nothing but party pies and Jatz, but my gambling debts won't repay themselves.

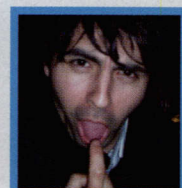
PSN: DrWho3987

PLAYING: Valkyria

Chronicle II

WANTING:

Duke Nukem Forever



JAMES ELLIS
CONTRIBUTOR

Never throw anything out. Nothing. There's always further use, and there's always value. And, there's always room for one more coat of paint. Trust me.

PSN: gtfaster49

PLAYING:

FIFA 11

WANTING:

Deus Ex: Human Revolution

INSIDER





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Enslaved's chief development nina Kristensen on monkeys and Andy Serkis.



16 BUILDING BLOCKBUSTERS
The brains behind RAGE, Fallout: New Vegas and Modern Warfare 2 speak.



30 ANGRY SACKBOY
Angry Sackboy will stop being angry when everyone else stops being stupid.

DON'T CALL IT A COMEBACK

DUKE NUKEM RETURNS (FOR REAL)

Duke Nukem Forever will be released in 2011 by Gearbox Software. Seriously

Gearbox Software and 2K Games have announced at this year's Penny Arcade Expo in Seattle, Washington, that *Duke Nukem Forever* will officially be released on PS3 in 2011.

However, Gearbox and 2K did not stop there. *Duke Nukem Forever* was actually playable for all attendees 17 and older at the expo. Gamers and the press alike were suddenly able to get their hands on, for the very first time, a game that was announced in 1997. To put that in perspective: most of the staff here were still in high school and the original *Gran Turismo* on PSone *hadn't even been released yet*.

"All great things take time... a lot of time," says Christoph Hartmann, president of 2K. "After a hiatus from the video game world, Duke Nukem is back and better than ever. The return of the king from the glory days of

shooters will satisfy our patient, die-hard fans, as well as a new generation of bubble gum-chewing, flat top and shades-wearing bad-asses. Make no mistake about it – *Duke Nukem Forever* is a testament to the era of when shooters were bodacious and fun."

The always-enthusiastic Gearbox big cheese Randy Pitchford was even more buzzed than usual after the announcement.

"Hail to the king, baby! It's unbelievable, it kicks ass and it's totally going to happen!" said Pitchford, "Gearbox has enabled die-hard key Duke Nukem franchise builders and skilled veteran game makers to stand together and deliver. I am thrilled to be in a position with the trust, power and means to make it happen. Am I crazy? Balls of steel, baby, balls of steel!"

The demo opens with Duke taking a slash in a urinal, shown in first-person. Following that Duke trudges out into to liaise with a bunch of military-types regarding 'Operation Cockblock' – the plan to take down the giant alien beast who taken over the field of the football stadium you're in. After feeding him a salvo of rockets Duke eventually felled the beast. He then kicked one of its eyeballs through the posts for a field goal.

The demo ends with the camera pulling out to reveal Duke in his living room playing the game himself, still in first-person. A girl pops her head up

from your crotch, below the camera. Then another. They ask him if the game was good, to which he replies, "After 12 f--king years, it better be." It's clear that the team isn't afraid to be self referential.

"I feel like I owe my career to Duke, and I'm not alone," Pitchford told *Wired.com*. "A lot of the guys at Gearbox had worked on *Duke Nukem 3D*, and a lot of the guys worked on *Duke Nukem Forever*. We felt like Duke was a part of us, too. And we were in a position where we knew that we could help. And I believed that George [Broussard, co-founder of 3D Realms] and Scott [Miller, co-founder of 3D Realms] could trust me, because I knew that they knew that I knew what the brand was all about."

"Take-Two, because we were working on *Borderlands* together, they could trust us... We had to spend money, we had to put resources on things. We had to take a big risk."

"Gearbox was handpicked as the new home for

Duke Nukem because of their continued passion, commitment and long-time heritage with the brand and 3D Realms," said Miller. "Gearbox and Duke Nukem make for a devastating match made in video game heaven."

Pitchford didn't just buy the game; he bought the brand – for an undisclosed sum – from 3D Realms itself.

"Gearbox was the only home appropriate for the Duke Nukem brand," said Broussard. "They are very talented and possess the perfect perspective and understanding of the brand. Their vision for its future direction is exciting and unbelievable. I am personally cannot wait for fans to see their unique take on the franchise. This will be a win-win situation for everyone involved, especially the fans."

Pitchford also brought in a third of the *Duke Nukem Forever* team, including what he considers "the full core."

"They've banded together, they are called Triptych [Games], and they're on our 10th floor," Pitchford told *Wired.com*.

"Their world got shattered, and the best thing that I could do was fund them, show them the support, help them and give them the opportunity to play the role they must play in seeing this through. You're going to become Duke Nukem and you're going to save the motherf--kin' world!"

In the time it's taken 3D Realms to *not* finish *Duke Nukem Forever* Gearbox has developed approximately 20 games across various formats since 1999.

IN SHORT...

A brief look at this month's news



- The second annual **gamescom** in Germany, now the largest trade fair for interactive games, attracted a total of 254,000 visitors and included more than 200 world, European and German premieres over five days.

- Katamari Damacy** and **Noby Noby Boy** creator Keita Takahashi is leaving Namco. Takahashi has expressed his dissatisfaction in the past with developing for the publisher.

- Gary Oldman and Ed Harris will voice two characters in **Call of Duty: Black Ops**. Oldman will reprise his role from **Call of Duty: World at War**, where he played Red Army squad leader Viktor Reznov, and Harris will lend his voice to CIA operative Jason Hudson, one of the game's main characters.

- The United Arab Emirates National Media Council has banned the sale of **Mafia 2** within its borders.

- Red Dead Redemption** has shipped more than 6.9 million units to date.

- Brian Wood, a designer at Canadian-based developer **Relic**, was killed in an accident with an SUV on the wrong side of the road driven by drug-users. When it was clear a crash was inevitable he swerved to avoid a head-on and placed himself between the SUV and his pregnant wife in the passenger seat.

- L.A. Noire** has been officially delayed until the first half of 2011.

- 2K Sports has announced **Top Spin 4** and is offering an exclusive vintage (pre-bald) Andre Agassi playable character with pre-orders.

- Christopher Lloyd will voice Doc Brown in Telltale's five-episode PSN **Back to the Future** series.

- Gearbox Software has revealed the "Game of the Year Edition" of **Borderlands** will be available on October 12. The pack will include the current DLC add-ons and a voucher to download the next one.

- EA has tapped British author and ex-SAS operator Chris Ryan (*The One That Got Away*) to write a prequel novel to **Medal of Honor**. Ryan made SAS history in the First Gulf War with the "longest escape and evasion by an SAS trooper or any other soldier."

- EA Sports MMA** will not be sold in Denmark due to a Scandinavian law prohibiting the advertisement of energy drinks in the region.

- Rumours suggest **This Is Vegas**, picked up by Warner Bros. after Midway went tits up, has been canned. It wasn't any good.

“Andy’s [Serkis] got the history you want for a CG performance, which is brilliant, **but he’s also an incredible character actor**”

NINA KRISTENSEN

INTERVIEW

NINJA THEORY

We chat to *Enslaved*'s chief of development and Melbourne expat **Nina Kristensen**

OPS: How does a game like this come around? It's a new IP so what's the process?

NK: We wanted to make a game that had a big story and had really good characters, where it's about the relationship between those characters.

We all grew up with [the TV show] *Monkey*, but our creative director and I read the [English translation of the] 16th Century novel *Monkey* [titled *Journey to the West*]. The characters are fun and interesting and so is their relationship, and it was a really good source of inspiration. Then we took the concept of magic and turned it into technology, set it in a post-apocalyptic world so the demons are now robots and so on.

We don't follow the story at all, but we use it as a really good source of how our world's structured.

OPS: So was it you wanting to do a particular type of story that lead you towards this new IP rather than following on with *Heavenly Sword*?

NK: That's true. The concept for *Enslaved* was making this story about two characters going on a mission together. We loved doing *Heavenly Sword* and it is very dear to our hearts, but it's not ours anymore.

OPS: You've done your first PS3 game, now you're on your second. What lessons did you learn from making *Heavenly Sword*?

NK: With *Enslaved* we were able to concentrate much more on the gameplay itself because we had a much better toolchain, so we got up and running and making content a lot faster. We also made some slightly subtle changes that immerse you in the combat. For example when you're fighting an enemy and you make an impact we Dutch the camera and zoom in, and finishing moves focus on Monkey and his face – so it's you having that experience. We're trying to pull you in and keep the game cinematic though out the whole thing, not just in the cutscenes but also in the gameplay.

OPS: The collaboration with Andy Serkis isn't a one off. What are the benefits with working with him?

NK: Andy's got the history you want for a CG performance, which is brilliant, but he's also an incredible character actor. When we were on the shoot he was great in getting everyone involved and feeling like a team. He gets the other actors prepared, in character and comfortable working in wetsuits with dots on their face.

On the first of the shoot, Andy and Lindsey [Shaw who plays Trip] had been in wardrobe two and a half hours or so, they're all suited up, they've got their dots on and Andy's like "right, everyone in the big space, we're warming up." There's about 40 or 50 people and we played [the schoolyard game] 'stuck in the mud', then we played a game I'd never played before where you all stand in a circle and have to run across to the other side, all at the same time. I will say we only did that exercise once, though, because the actors sweated and the markers slipped, so they were back into wardrobe.

OPS: So was Andy your first choice for Monkey?

NK: As soon as we had the concept there Andy saw it before any publishers saw it because if he liked it we wanted him on board. He only does the projects that interest him, and he was on board from the get-go.

OPS: When did you start working on *Enslaved*?

NK: About two-and-a-half years ago.

OPS: So what happened between the end of your last project and beginning on *Enslaved*?

NK: We took a break; the small core team were trying to work out what the next game was going to be. For a couple of months we did 'mini projects' as we called it – basically people could do whatever they wanted as long as it furthered them in some way. Some people learned new skills, some did R&D. A few changed job roles; a couple of environment artists were interested in doing characters which is similar but different skill sets. One of our senior character artists ran a character workshop for six weeks, and I think there were four or five guys that ended up switching into the other discipline.



OPS: What sort of audience are you pitching *Enslaved* at? Who do you feel is going to embrace this game?

NK: I think gamers, first and foremost because it's not a walk in the park, it's a good challenge. You have to think about what you're doing; you can't just go whaling in and expect to just get through. It is easy to just pick up and start playing, it's not hard for someone who doesn't play as much to get into.

OPS: Is the character of Monkey based on anyone you know? He looks like Robbie Williams on protein shakes.

NK: We thought really deeply about what he would look like. Monkey's whole body tells a story. So while he's ludicrously broad, our Art and Technical Directors were looking at the anatomy of someone who just climbs a lot, what it would do to them and so the anatomy's all correct, although it's a little exaggerated. There are a lot of details on his skin too, like his scars for example. The shapes aren't arbitrary, they're from the robots; it's hot metal scarring.

OPS: Is the game skewed towards the exploration and picking your way around the environment, or the combat?

NK: At the start you're just learning what all the elements are, but pretty rapidly they combine quite a lot. So when you go into

a scenario you need to see what's going on and how you want to approach it and often there'll be opportunities to clamber around to a different vantage point. As you get into the game you need to be careful about how you tackle your enemies, there are lots of different types with their own strengths and weaknesses. There's a point where Trip can identify a mech's weak point, so you might spot the guy in the distance with the machine gun who you can't get to by running at, but has a weakness where you can hijack his machine gun and shoot everyone else effectively. If you choose that path you need to find a way around to him to take him down first.

OPS: For a post-apocalyptic world it's very bright and colourful. Was there any particular place that inspired the design or environment?

NK: Not a particular place, but we did actually think about what the world would be like, so we made up our own world history from now up until about 150 years in the future. The mechs rose up, and people became less and less relevant in the battles and were wiped out, so there are only 50,000 people left in North America. With all the mechs left behind, it's like mines being left behind after a war; they don't do anything unless you interact with them, and nature's come back and covering it all up. Our world is a beautiful, lush place that's been reclaimed by nature but it's littered with danger. We like that mix of things, and frankly our art directors wouldn't let us create a game that wasn't bright and beautiful.

OPS: It seems to be a new trend in game design, moving away from browns and greys. Do you think this can continue?

NK: Lighting's really important. You can put colour into a scene, that's fine, but if it's not well lit and if it doesn't have great materials it doesn't really sell it. Thinking about where the light is, what kind of colours the lights are, how it's going to bounce and where you're gathering your light from – this is all important stuff.


OPS: There's been a real spike in cooperative games and you have one with two characters. Do you think people will expect a certain type of game out of one with two characters?

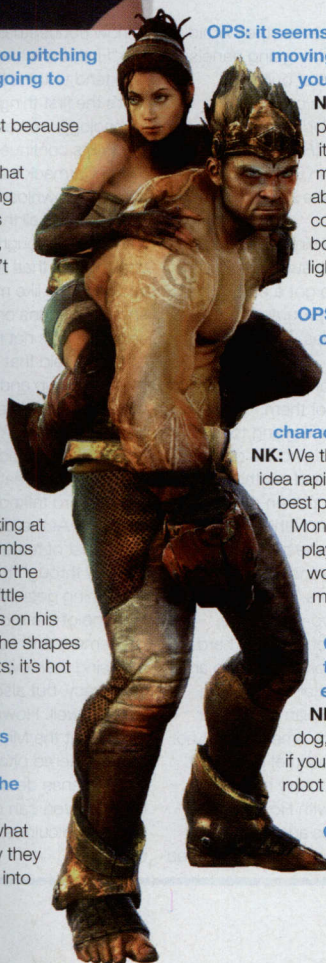
NK: We thought about co-op but discarded the idea rapidly. For us, it's all about making the best possible experience for a player and Monkey's clearly the coolest character to play. In terms of telling the story it just works better from that perspective and making it co-op would've just diluted it.

OPS: Can you tell us a secret about this game that you've told no one else?

NK: The dog's got a tongue. It's a metallic dog, with a metallic tongue, and will eat you if you don't run away fast enough. The big robot on the poster, that's the dog.

OPS: Is it a naughty dog?

NK: Well, you will have to destroy it eventually. 



ANALYSIS

PIECING TOGETHER THE PUZZLE

We join four gaming legends as they break down the meat and potatoes behind crafting a blockbuster and delve a little deeper into their background in the industry

QuakeCon is a gaming event like no other. Amid all the chaos were some truly intriguing panels, breaking down the mechanics of building a blockbuster title. The pinnacle was one such discussion with Bethesda legend Todd Howard (*Fallout 3*), id Software's Tim Willits (*RAGE*) and formerly Infinity Ward, now Respawn Entertainment, head honchos Jason West and Vince Zampella (*Modern Warfare 2*).

After a journey into their first gaming experiences, the titles that piqued their interest to surge forward and take up a career in gaming, we got a bit of insight into how each made the leap from programmer to lead designer and the friendly rivalries. Todd Howard warmed the crowd.

"They put me in charge of a project right away, which was incredible irresponsible of them," said Howard. "Early on all our games were going to kill id (Software). Then id would make one and we'd all be like, damn! Here's our *Doom*-killer, and we thought we'd finally got them with *Fallout* and then they come out with *RAGE*. Teams change... and I think we can all agree, we've worked with the same people for quite some time now and that faith and knowledge separates a lot of groups from others."

Tim Willits countered with his two-man team starting point and offered a mantra of "work as hard as possible, be a team player, support your group and never get discouraged." Jason West also chimed in with their approach, "We have a flat-plan system for input, and anyone can step up at any time and say, no! No! Don't kill that idea. It is truly awesome! Keep that. But if no-one steps up, it should probably be let go."

After a trip down memory lane with Howard reminiscing about answering phones and hand-packaging their own titles the conversation switched

to how conceptualisation of AAA titles begins.

"First, think, what is special about it?" said Howard. "We tend to think the world is our main character, and that's the first thing we design. Then the rules of the technology, we keep the rules fairly simple."

Willits continued with *RAGE*'s more cavalier attitude. "John Carmack was working on very early mega-textures and was downloading a tonne of data from NASA," he said. "He had all this terrain laid out, and was flying through it and we all thought, hey, that's cool. We can make a game out of that! And we can drive through that, that'd be cool, and we like muscle cars, they're cool. And hey, we should put guns on the muscle cars, like *Mad Max*... I'm serious, that's not much different to how it happened."

West said that Respawn tackles new games from the bottom up and top down. They think of gameplay mechanics that are cool and interesting – but if that's all they have, there's nothing cohesive about the title. So they also create a world from the top down that incorporates the foundation features in a way that makes sense.

Howard talked about RPGs and the problems of freedom. At the beginning of a project, an RPG can have a list of features that Howard defined as "obscene." It's only through the long development process that everything gets pruned down to the final game.

One of the more interesting points was the genuine excitement and trepidation each developer had for releasing their own demos at E3, after years shrouded in secrecy, but also the buzz surrounding competitor's titles as well. Howard recalled, "Jason and Vince gave a demo at the Microsoft briefing for *Modern Warfare*, and the demo pitch was 'crawl through grass'. It was a great intense demo, and that game's going to kick ass, because you can crawl through grass. At face value it sounds ridiculous, but it's all about presentation and execution."

The guys finished with a call to modify the journalist/developer relationship, as the whole process is incredibly nerve racking as they put their baby out to be judged by the media. Zampella and Howard in particular implored reviewers to explore every facet of their titles before scoring and mused that at times they hadn't even completed the game in question.

The relationship between developers and gamers themselves is less tense but remains central to everything developers do. "Every comment I read on YouTube or anything is a voice stuck in my head for life," said West on taking gamer feedback into account.

The hour-long panel simply flew by, and it was impossible to get the full feel for it on paper. Besides the influx of information and frank discussion, it was apparent that all panellists were great mates and had mutual respect for each other's projects, which is refreshing to see in any industry.

WHAT TROUBLE?

NO RESPAWN CAMPING

Any of you reading this piece quietly hoping for some juicy gossip about a new Respawn title or the brouhaha between Jason West, Vince Zampella and the Activision break-up will be sorely disappointed. The guys were pretty quiet in general throughout the panel. Jason West's eyes glazed over at the mere mention of Infinity Ward or Treyarch, or any new title from Respawn. This still didn't stop the fanboy heavy crowd from asking questions they clearly had no intention of answering. At one point Jason West slumped to the table and repeatedly banged his head on the table in disbelief.

"A FAST-PACED
SHOOTER
UNLIKE ANY
OTHER"



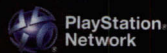
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TOP 10

THINGS TO JUMP FROM

Acrophobics, be aware – this one's for lemmings only. We've picked the best places to let gravity do (nearly) all the work so you can go over the edge with as much style as possible.

1

**JUST CAUSE 2
THE MILE HIGH CLUB**

You'll need a chopper or a plane to fly to the strip-club zeppelin that hangs above the northeast of the map. Get to the edge of the small runway and throw yourself off and admire the rapid descent. It's even more awesome if you jump while something is exploding behind you. Everything's more awesome if you do it when something is exploding behind you.



2

**ASSASSIN'S CREED
ACRE STEEPLE**

Synchronize, check. Haystack, check. Balls... double check. It's all over a little too quickly but is well worth your time picking your way up the building. The way the camera pulls out and brings the ground screaming toward you rolls your guts the first time, but the haystack never gives way.

3

**GRAND THEFT AUTO IV
ROTTERDAM TOWER**

Take a chopper to the top of Rotterdam Tower (it's the tallest building in the game, based on The Empire State Building), jump out at just the right time and you'll find yourself on top of the world – King Kong style! Take in the scenery and see if you can make it to ground without dying. We will be *amazed* if you do.

4

**PROTOTYPE
THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING**

We're talking about the real Empire State Building this time, not a knock-off. *Prototype* has plenty of places to jump from – all made even cooler if you use a super move and blow stuff to hell when you land. If you're so inclined to do so again, just run up the nearest building. Too easy!

5

**THE SABOTEUR
EIFFEL TOWER**

Another climber, this one takes a little longer. It's a little fidgety to get to the top, but when you get there, it's Trophy time! Failing that, you can just take the elevator we only discovered second time around. Leap off and aim for the kidney-shaped pool below and you'll actually survive.

6

**SAN ANDREAS
MOUNT CHILIAD**

The only thing you really have to worry about here is what you're going to use to jump off that conveniently placed ramp. Push-bike or petrol tanker... who cares? Get some run up and go baby go! Best of all you can bail out and pop your parachute for maximum thrill and style points.

7

**SKATE 2
THE MURDERHORN**

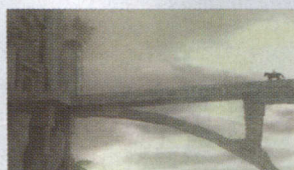
Jump from this and you'll be dam happy. New San Vanelona's giant concrete dam is the best drop in any skating game ever – *Skate 3* included. What starts as a jump ends up into one of the fastest runs in a skating game. Double points if you lie on your back and spin once you hit the tunnel.

8

**INFAMOUS
TOP OF THE PRISON**

After one of the boss fights, about two-thirds of the way through, you'll have to climb the prison on top of Warren Island. There's a couple of ways you can fall here: nice and gently or power drive! We chose the latter. Gently is not a word in our vocabulary. We had to use a dictionary to even spell it here.

9

**SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS
BRIDGE JUMP**

Disclaimer: For you to climb the side of the tower you need a LOT of stamina. Once you get to the top, you'll see a bridge. If you leap off this bridge somewhere in the middle, you'll fall further because you'll be going into that big chasm. Trust us – you'll be falling for a long time and live if you land in the water.

10

**TOMB RAIDER
GREAT PYRAMID IN ATLANTIS**

So this jump is a death jump. It's right at the end of the game. Those of you who played through the PSone classic may recall it. However unlike many other jumps, this drop is big that she actually has time to inhale and *scream three times* before dropping *into* onto the lava. The absurdity compensates for the cruelty.

INFOCUS

NEED FOR SPEED
HOT PURSUIT

We've been pining for a sequel to the best *Need for Speed* game ever, *Hot Pursuit 2*, for years. EA's 2010 *Need for Speed* title isn't called *Hot Pursuit 3* but it might as well be.

With *Burnout* developer Criterion at the helm things are looking absolutely smashing – and we mean that figuratively and literally.

Mixing the two key ingredients of *Need for Speed* titles past and present – exotic supercars and cops – *Hot Pursuit* is a real return to form. Forget the likes of the rubbish *Undercover*, this is the real deal.

Every vehicle in Criterion's extensive

car list, which reportedly (and unfortunately) contains no Aussie cars, comes in two versions: a racer and a highway patrol version. According to Criterion the manufacturers all love the idea; they were all keen to see how cool their cars looked with a cop livery plastered on it.

What's most disappointing is that, while insiders suggest the Carbon Motors E7 will be included, the Chevrolet Caprice cop car (based on the Commodore and heading to the US in 2011) is absent. Hopefully it's just a licensing issue and not a choice by Criterion.

AROUND THE WORLD **IN PS3**

OPS trawls high and low for what's going on around the globe in gaming



LOUISIANA, USA BETTER LEARNING THROUGH GAMES, PT 1

The education wing of the Louisiana Transportation Research Center is testing a bespoke videogame hoping to use it in place of a classroom to teach highway workers. The workers use a controller to control an avatar as they learn safety rules in simulated work zones. "There was a great deal of competition to see who could get their avatars in the right place the fastest," said associate director Glynn Cavin.



INDIANA, USA BETTER LEARNING THROUGH GAMES, PT 2

Students at Wabash College will now study Valve's *Portal* alongside Aristotle, John Donne and Shakespeare in a new syllabus starting this year. Michael Abbott, a teacher at the arts college, posted the revelation on his blog *The Brainy Gamer*. The new course is designed so that students will "confront what it means to be human and how we understand ourselves, our relationships, and our world."



SIENA, ITALY GRAN FAUX PAS-RISMO

Gran Turismo 5's Piazza del Campo kart racing track has raised the ire of officials in Siena. They are demanding Sony remove the track from the game due to it displaying flags and colours of 17 districts that are on the site of a centuries-old bareback horse race, the Palio di Siena (seen in *Quantum of Solace*). Anna Carli, the CEO of the Consortium for the Protection of the Palio, said that the city might request lawyers to seize *GT5* upon its release.



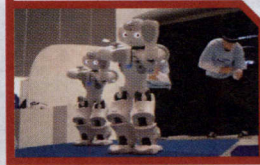
TOKYO, JAPAN TOTALLY NUTS

Future PlayStations could be made from cashews, as NEC Corp. is developing a bioplastic that utilises a byproduct of cashew processing, cardanol, and cellulosic material from plants. It will be available from 2013. Plastics used for electronics are petroleum-based because they can withstand high operating temperatures unlike current bioplastics. The main benefit of this cashew blend is that it'll be more environmentally friendly.



SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA ROBOT ROCK

The reality of having robots in your home got a little bit closer as scientists from the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), programmed a troupe to perform a hip-hop routine showing that bots can move with more grace than your average Dalek. Professor Mary-Anne Williams, director of the Innovation and Enterprise Research Laboratory, said "It's all about having precise control over a robot's body... We don't want them bumping into things."



INTERNATIONAL CHARTS



UK

Source: UKIE



JAPAN

Source: VGCHARTZ



USA

Source: NPD

- 1 Mafia 2 2K
- 2 Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days Square Enix
- 3 Toy Story 3 Disney
- 4 Red Dead Redemption Rockstar
- 5 Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands Ubisoft
- 6 Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2 Ubisoft
- 7 LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4 Warner Bros.
- 8 Battlefield: Bad Company 2 EA
- 9 Modern Warfare 2 Activision
- 10 Need of Sped SHIFT EA

- 1 A.C.E.: Another Century's Episode Namco
- 2 Modern Warfare 2 Activision
- 3 Sengoku Basara 3 Capcom
- 4 Chou Jigen Game: Neptune Idea Factory
- 5 Jikkyou Powerful Pro Yakyuu 2010 Konami
- 6 Assassin's Creed II Ubisoft
- 7 Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days Square Enix
- 8 ModNation: Mugen no Kart Oukoku Sony
- 9 Pro Yakyuu Spirits 2010 Konami
- 10 Shirokishi Monogatari Sony

- 1 Madden NFL 11 EA
- 2 Mafia 2 2K
- 3 Modern Warfare 2 Activision
- 4 Red Dead Redemption Rockstar
- 5 God of War III Sony
- 6 NCAA Football 11 EA
- 7 Uncharted 2: Among Thieves Sony
- 8 Assassin's Creed II Ubisoft
- 9 Grand Theft Auto IV Rockstar
- 10 LittleBigPlanet Sony

INFOCUS

CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS

Taking place during the Cold War, a first for the series, *Call of Duty: Black Ops* sees players on covert missions behind enemy lines in locations such as the Ural Mountains, Laos, Vietnam and Cuba.

We've spoken at length about the multiplayer in last month's exclusive reveal. It's the single-player that has our attention now. Aside from at least one level where you'll be the pilot of an SR-71 Blackbird, the single-player mode in *Black Ops* will cast you

as two Studies and Observations Group (SOG) operators called Mason and Hudson.

The SOG was a highly classified, multi-service US spec ops unit which conducted covert unconventional warfare operations prior to and during the Vietnam War. These tasks included capturing enemy prisoners, rescuing downed pilots, busting out POWs and other 'psychological' operations.

Basically, if the SAS didn't get you, these guys would.



PRE-ORDER PARADISE

The hottest deals, the coolest stuff – what are you waiting for?

ENSLAVED

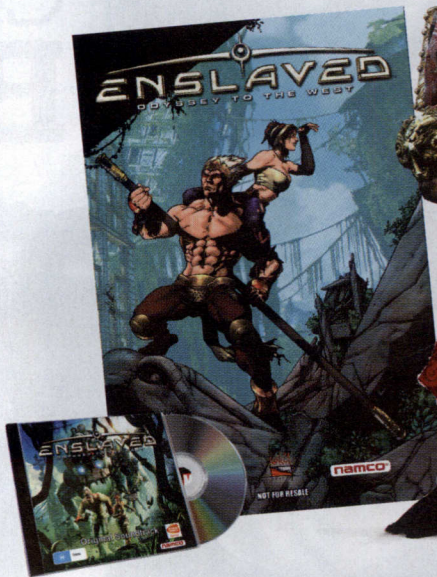
A modern-day take on the classic 400-year-old story, *Journey to the West*, *Enslaved* is the story of a man called Monkey and girl called Trip, whom Monkey must protect in a post-apocalyptic land. It's 150 years in the future and robots, the old tools of war, still roam around. Monkey and Trip must elude their captors and escape the perilous New York City in this slick action game from the makers of *Heavenly Sword*.

Preorder bonus, available at JB HiFi

- Classic Monkey DLC where every hit strikes with the power of two.
- The Official Soundtrack by Nitin Sawhney
- An *Enslaved* Marvel Comic book containing over 40 pages of *Enslaved* information

JB HiFi \$108

Estimated dispatch date: Late 2010



MEDAL OF HONOR

Got an itch that's not the incredible bushranger beard you've been cultivating for the past few months? Perhaps it's your trigger finger. If so, this game should scratch it. Inspired by the actions of a secret group of elite warriors, known as Tier 1 operators, *Medal of Honor* is set during the 2001 War in Afghanistan.

Limited Edition includes:

- Instant access to three weapons: MP7, TOZ-194 and 870MC2
- Access to *Battlefield 3* beta
- HD remastered *Medal of Honor: Frontline* (exclusive to PS3)

EB GAMES \$108

Special offer: The *Tier 1 Edition* is exclusive to EB Games. It includes instant access to the Assault Class Tier 1 bearded operator, the M60 and Spec Ops Class Camouflage

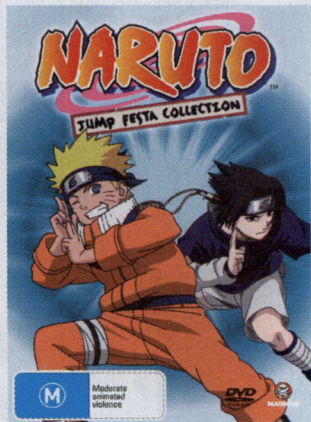
Estimated dispatch date: 14/10/2010

JB HiFi \$109

Estimated dispatch date: 14/10/2010

GAME \$89

Estimated dispatch date: 14/10/2010 (web only price, not available in store)



NARUTO SHIPPUDEN ULTIMATE NINJA STORM 2

Based on the incredibly popular anime, *Ultimate Ninja Storm 2* features more of what makes Naruto so great: ninjas beating the snot out of each other in glorious cel-shaded graphics. You'll meet a host of criminal Akatsuki characters, and in an astonishing story twist even see Sasuke wearing an Akatsuki costume. With the original Japanese voiceover, an almost endless number of unlockables and power ups to discover, a host of brand new environments to explore and two-player offline multiplayer, *Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm 2* is a tornado of fierce ninja action.

Preorder bonus, available at EB Games:

Naruto Jump Festa Collection DVD, featuring specials only seen at the Shonen Jump Festival in Japan: Mission: Find the crimson four-leaf clover and Mission: Protect the Hidden Waterfall Village

EB GAMES \$98 (web only price)

Estimated dispatch date: 14/10/2010

NEED FOR SPEED HOT PURSUIT: LIMITED EDITION

Prepare for a battle of wits and very, very fast cars as cops and speeders go head to head in this arcade-fuelled racing game. Developed by Criterion Games, the geniuses behind the legendary *Burnout* series of racing games, this latest in the *NFS* franchise revisits one of the most entertaining and white-knuckle inducing chapters in the game's history.

Limited Edition includes:

- Alfa Romeo 8C Competizione
- Ford Shelby GT500
- Four regular cars unlocked from the start, including two speeder cars and two cop cars.

EB GAMES \$98 (web only price)

Estimated dispatch date: 18/11/2010



DRIVER: SAN FRANCISCO

Tanner's back. Take to the streets of San Francisco in the hunt for Jericho, your arch villain, in over 100 different cars. Using a unique 'shift' feature, *Driver: San Francisco* promises to be the ultimate car chase game, with the iconic city as your playground for action.

Collector Pack includes:

- 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T model
- Map of San Francisco
- Two in-game vehicles

GAME \$129.95

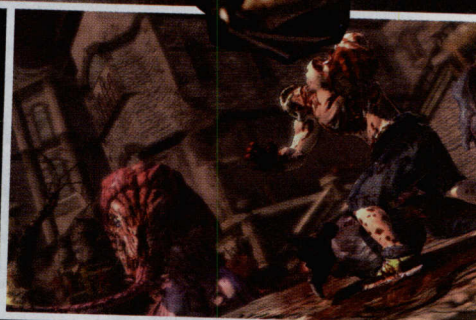
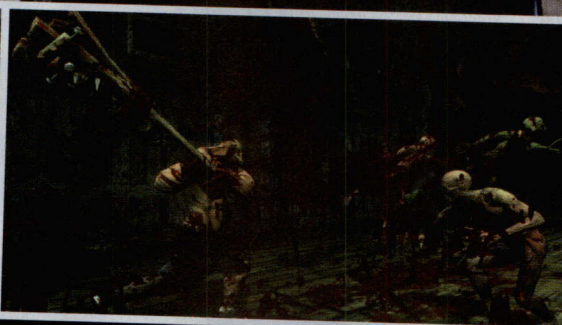
Estimated Dispatch Date: TBA 2011

Special Offer: *Driver* fuzzy dice

EB GAMES \$128

Estimated Dispatch Date: TBA 2011





INFOCUS

SPLATTERHOUSE

Just one look at the claret-filled screens of *Splatterhouse* and you'd be forgiven for feeling the early twinges of a goregasm.

This 3D beat 'em up is on track to 'out-violence' the new *Mortal Kombat* and we have grave fears that its gratuitous depictions of dismemberment may in turn get it torn limb from limb by our classification system.

In *Splatterhouse's* defence, you're brainning the twisted minions of hell – not people. You see, you play the role of a nerd who puts on a

demonic mask in order to save his kidnapped girlfriend. Which is a *nice thing to do*.

Like an evil director's cut of Jim Carrey's *The Mask*, you morph into a hulking brute who solves all of life's problems by scooping them up, impaling them on spiked chairs and sending them through an industrial strength microwave oven. Shish kebab is good eatin'.

Another of your talents is being able to sprout claws and to (eventually) regrow limbs if they get chopped off. Just like in real life.

THIS MONTH

Your 30-day planner of games and goodness!

SEPTEMBER
29
**GUITAR HERO:
WARRIORS OF ROCK**

Ladies and gentlemen, prepare to shred. The sixth *Guitar Hero* game goes back to its roots with all-out rock – sorry, RAWK – and a new story mode where you have to reunite The Hero with a legendary guitar.

OCTOBER 7 BURIED

This painfully taut thriller hits the cinema today, starring Ryan Reynolds as a truck driver who wakes up in a box. How did he get there? How's he going to get out? You'll be engrossed from start to finish.

OCTOBER 7-10 SUPERCHEAP AUTO BATHURST 1000

Fords and Holdens race around Australia's most famous race track this weekend in a festival of speed. It'll have to do until Codies get onto a V8 Supercars 4.

OCTOBER 9 PARAGUAY VS SOCCEROOS

Sydney Football Stadium erupts when the Socceroos and Paraguay go head-to-head in this international friendly match, the Socceroos' last before the year is out. Jump online and check out ticketek.com.au for details.

OCTOBER 14 MEDAL OF HONOR

Telling the story of super-elite soldiers, the Tier 1 operators, the latest *Medal of Honor* looks astounding. Set in the modern day, a first for the series, you'll be but a shadow in the harshest battlefield on Earth: Afghanistan.

OCTOBER 16 TAME IMPALA

Australia's own "psychedelic hypno-groove melodic rock music" trio (their words) play at The Tivoli in Queensland tonight from 8pm. Whoever they are and whatever they do, we like it. Go to ticketek.com to get a ticket to the show.

OCTOBER 21 VANQUISH

Made by the same guys behind *Bayonetta* and cooked up by *Resident Evil*'s creator, *Vanquish* is an all-out action game set in space. The Russians have taken over a giant laser that's pointed at the States, and it's up to you to sort 'em out.

OCTOBER 27 LEGION

Out today on Blu-ray and DVD, *Legion* stars Paul Bettany as the Archangel Michael, on a mission to save a clutch of humans from a swarm of vengeful angels sent by the Almighty to wipe the Earth clean.

OCT 30 SHAUN WHITE SKATEBOARDING

The floppy haired Shaun White presents his take on the skateboarding genre, where you have to bring colour back to a world under the control of The Ministry. Also features White's original trick, the Armadillo. Bodacious!

NOVEMBER 9 CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS

Treyarch takes us to Vietnam and beyond with a bunch of fantastical weapons. Shotguns that spew fire! Explosive arrows! Rocking horses made from dynamite! We made that last one up, but we don't need to pretend that this looks hot.

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Coming soon to a store near you!

OUT NOW

**Kane & Lynch 2:
Dog Days**
Genre: Action
Distributor: Namco Bandal
Partners

Mafia II
Genre: Action
Distributor: 2K

Madden NFL 11
Genre: Sports
Distributor: EA

Rugby League Live
Genre: Sports
Distributor: HES

F1 2010
Genre: Racing
Distributor: Namco Bandal
Partners

**Castlevania:
Lords of Shadow**
Genre: Action
Distributor: Mindscape

**Guitar Hero: Warriors
of Rock**
Genre: Music
Distributor: Activision

R.U.S.E.
Genre: RTS
Distributor: Ubisoft

FIFA 11
Genre: Sports
Distributor: EA

**Spider-Man: Shattered
Dimensions**
Genre: Action
Distributor: Activision

Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2
Genre: Flight
Distributor: Ubisoft

**Shaun White
Skateboarding**
Genre: Sports
Distributor: Ubisoft

OCTOBER

Dead Rising 2
Genre: Action
Distributor: THQ

WRC
Genre: Racing
Distributor: AFA

**International
Cricket 2010**
Genre: Sports
Distributor: Namco Bandal
Partners

**Pro Evolution
Soccer 2011**
Genre: Sports
Distributor: Mindscape

F.3.A.R.
Genre: Shooter
Distributor: Warner Bros.

Fallout: New Vegas
Genre: RPG
Distributor: Namco Bandal
Partners

Splatterhouse
Genre: Action
Distributor: Namco Bandal
Partners

Medal of Honor
Genre: Shooter
Distributor: EA

Vanquish
Genre: Action
Distributor: Sega

NBA Elite 11
Genre: Sports
Distributor: Sega

Rock Band 3
Genre: Music
Distributor: EA

NOVEMBER

The Last Guardian
Genre: Adventure
Distributor: Sony

Gran Turismo 5
Genre: Racing
Distributor: Sony

**Call of Duty:
Black Ops**
Genre: Shooter
Distributor: Activision

**Need For Speed
Hot Pursuit**
Genre: Racing
Distributor: EA

**Assassin's Creed
Brotherhood**
Genre: Action
Distributor: Ubisoft

DECEMBER

Crysis 2
Genre: Shooter
Distributor: EA

TBA 2010

AFL 10
Genre: Sports
Distributor: Sony

DJ Hero 2
Genre: Music
Distributor: Activision

**James Bond 007:
Blood Stone**
Genre: Action
Distributor: Activision

EA Sports MMA
Genre: Sports
Distributor: EA

**Star Wars: The Force
Unleashed II**
Genre: Action
Distributor: Activision

**Majin and the
Forsaken Kingdom**
Genre: Adventure
Distributor: Namco Bandal
Partners

TBA 2011

**Spec Ops:
The Line**
Genre: Action
Distributor: 2K

L.A. Noire
Genre: Adventure
Distributor: Rockstar

Max Payne 3
Genre: Action
Distributor: Rockstar

Bulletstorm
Genre: Shooter
Distributor: EA

Agent
Genre: Action
Distributor: Rockstar

inFamous 2
Genre: Action
Distributor: Sony

**Deus Ex: Human
Revolution**
Genre: Action
Distributor: Ubisoft

**Driver:
San Francisco**
Genre: Racing
Distributor: Ubisoft

**Test Drive
Unlimited 2**
Genre: Racing
Distributor: Namco Bandal
Partners

Portal 2
Genre: Shooter
Distributor: EA

**True Crime:
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**Batman:
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“QUOTE UNQUOTE”

Industry chatter, inside tips and loose lips



“At the end of the day, I think we didn't want to scare off the parents who might be buying the game for their kid.”

Insomniac's TJ Fixman on why they went with *Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One* instead of '4play'.



“The goal for *Dead Rising 2* is to replace the *Resident Evil* franchise and become the number one IP within Capcom.”

Fightin' words from outspoken *Dead Rising* bossman Keiji Inafune.



“Go down the shaft and stay 'til Christmas.”

Randy Pitchford explains what a 'Chilean miner' is after he tells *ign.com* that *this* is what his wife promised him if he took up the *Duke Nukem Forever* cause and released it.



“We're going to support the hell out of *Black Ops*. That will be our focus post-release: making sure we keep our fans engaged.”

Mark Lamia, head of Treyarch, doesn't want you to trade-in *Black Ops*.



PlayStation Network



XBOX 360

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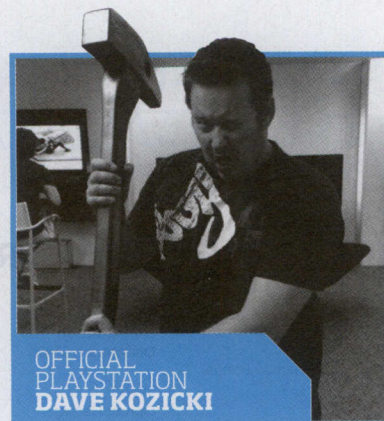
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OPINION

PUTTING THE "U"
INTO **HONOUR**

“So what are you? An elite warrior... or a petulant child only caring for personal glory?”



OFFICIAL
PLAYSTATION
DAVE KOZICKI

After investing just over 220 hours in *Battlefield: Bad Company 2*, I can be silent no more. I'm pissed off. I'm pissed off that I'm forced to play with an increasing amount of gamers who consider selfish types of play 'standard', or worse still, encourage it.

Who the hell are you people, and where is your sense of honour?

Yeah. That's right. Honour. It's called playing with integrity.

Perhaps you adopt a deathmatch philosophy and ignore TEAM BASED objectives to concentrate on your kill count. Maybe you're a spawn camper. If so, learn how to play with a little something called 'skill' rather than relying on cheap kills to pad your online CV. In ancient times, your peers would demand you sacrifice a part of your little finger as a reminder of your disrespect, though suicide would be a

healthier alternative for the team. At least then, you would die with honour intact.

Honour.

The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration awarded by the US Government to soldiers who distinguish themselves "conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy."

It is usually awarded posthumously, as the recipient more than likely gave their life in the line of fire. The US Marine Corps adopted

"Semper Paratus", which translates to 'Always Faithful' and has a leave-no-man-behind philosophy. I don't see awards given to soldiers that let their teammates down; only gamers reap rewards from this type of behaviour.

Here's some free advice. In *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* why don't you Assault guys throw down an ammo crate if you see a squad-mate in a defensive position, or even something ludicrous like when THEY ASK YOU FOR ONE. Just hit left on the D-pad. It ain't that freaking hard.

Maybe you spy a tank raping your home base. Throw and trigger some C4 with no regard for your own life, losing a mere ten points off your score for a suicide but earning a welcome respite for the entire team. My KD ratio has gone down two or three per cent because I often use C4 before I'm clear of the kill zone. I can't speak for the rest of you, but that's part and parcel of how I play.

Medics: before reviving a downed comrade as you salivate over easy points, maybe survey the area and kill the bastard that just ploughed through half the squad? THEN revive and increase your tally knowing that the reanimated soldiers won't be callously mowed down mere seconds later. Recon, when an M-Com station is armed how about calling down the thunder with a mortar strike to dissuade defenders from disarming it? Sometimes a few seconds breathing room is all you need.

By putting the needs of the TEAM first, you'll earn the solid respect of your teammates and satisfaction you actually contributed something – and it just doesn't get better than that. When a team is working together unselfishly, and each player is firing on all cylinders, it's an absolute joy to be a part of. It's those moments that keep me coming back for more. I just wish they weren't so freaking few and far between.

So what are you? An elite warrior who thinks beyond themselves and puts the needs of the team first, or a petulant child only caring for personal glory? A bad-ass muthafucking Marine or a baby sucking at the teat of its fallen brethren?

I know which one I aspire to be. Semper Fi.

Dave Kozicki has an unhealthy addiction to *Battlefield: Bad Company 2*'s multiplayer, playing as a shotgun samurai and regularly abuses squadmates for selfish play. When he's not online, he's an outspoken freelance journalist whose inane rants and unconventional opinions can be found at www.rawdlc.com

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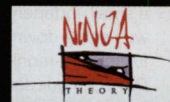
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OPINION

THE BEST OF TIMES ARE THE BLURST OF TIMES

The greatest type of fun is emergent. The trick is to spontaneously create a challenge where your chances of safety and success are minimal. For example; organising a work-endorsed downhill luge event for charity, studying the city streets, asking local council for permission and wearing protective clothing is lamesauce. Quitting your job and bombing that hill on your stolen office chair is rad.

This concept extends to most videogames – even ones produced on the original PlayStation. After getting hands on with the new *Driver* at E3, Luke, Paul, Steph and I decided to crank out the original and get sideways in a test of skill that has been haunting my dreams for 11 years.

“Failure still equals fun. When the odds against you are so ludicrously high, every metre gained is a miracle”

Many, many moons ago, when *Driver* first came out, I had a job selling games in a small, independent shop. Whenever there was some down-time, me and the other fulltime ‘till-monkey’ would take turns playing *Driver* on our demo machine. Being that we had only minutes before another soccer mum would walk through the door (and ask if we

stock “Tom Hank’s Skateboarding”), we had devised a short, brutal challenge that was nigh on impossible. Whoever could best the test would be showered in praise – the loser had to give up a whole week’s worth of pay, \$104.60.

Screw you, retail.

Our challenge: Survival Mode. San Fran. Start in the park and avoid certain death by an endless swarm of psychotic cop cars. If you can make it onto the street unexploded, hug the sidewalks (this throws off the police AI), and make your way to the Golden Gate bridge. Pray that you have enough health left to slam through three police roadblocks (!!!) and make it to the promised land beyond. Do one victory lap of the crappy square street located here to *win at life*.

I just couldn’t do it back then. And after an extra decade worth of gaming experience, the combined OPS crew still can’t do it now. But what a blast we had trying.

Failure still equals fun. When the odds against you are so ludicrously high, every metre gained is a miracle. The po-lice will hunt you down like you’re Hannibal Lecter with the President’s daughter in the boot and a box of Krispy Kremes in the glovebox. Hell, even the hardware works against you; the framerate chugs while you’re getting molested by motorcars. And given that the draw distance is, like, 12 metres, respawning fuzz can be on your arse like white on rice in a glass of milk on a paper plate in a snowstorm

Nevertheless it’s stupid amounts of retro fun as a pass-the-controller challenge. But don’t just take my word for it. Go hit up *Driver* on PSN and join the continuing struggle to cross this invisible finish line. Do it for your chance to win 104.60 Respect Points (note: points are not redeemable for cash or actual respect).

Adam Mathew thinks all games need a dedicated ‘burnout’ button.





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OPINION

WHEN TWO TRIBES GO TO WAR

I followed last month's righteous mainstream media fury over *Medal of Honor* with an utter lack of surprise.

For the most part, typically clueless reporters sneezed out typically clueless pieces with sensationalist headers like "Military groups outraged over Taliban war game" and "Dead soldiers' families outraged as EA allows gamers to fight for Taliban".

A Taliban game, I thought? Who the hell is making *this* shit? Can they send me some preview code? This sounds absolutely awful.

Then I realised they were referring to *Medal of Honor*. A game that, contrary to what the daily news would have you think, has players fight as elite US soldiers in their war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. It's the multiplayer that's the problem. The multiplayer that casts players as both US troops and their opposition (the Taliban) and has them battle each other.

This is barely news. It's only natural the competitive multiplayer aspect of *Medal of Honor*, where players are pitted against one another online, will feature two opposing groups.

That people aren't aware of the distinction between single-player and multiplayer isn't EA's fault.

In response to the sudden criticism EA spokeswoman Amanda Taggart was quoted as saying the game's format "merely reflects the fact that every conflict has two sides."

"Most of us have been doing this since we were seven: someone plays cop, someone must be robber," went her quote in *The Sunday Times*. "In *Medal of Honor* multiplayer, someone's got to be the Taliban. *Nobody who plays video games is going to be shocked or surprised by this.*"

The emphasis is mine but only because it's worth noting that this is the most intelligent thing ever said regarding videogame controversy, including anything that will be said

in the future.

This is bizspeak for "Calm down idiots" and it's entirely true. Somebody has to be "the good guy" and somebody has to be "the bad guy". That's how it works. Taggart's comparison to children playing cops 'n robbers, echoed by people the world over since, couldn't be more apt.

I understand the people these journalists have spoken to are concerned games like this 'trivialise' war. It's because they associate 'games' with Pac-Man and 'points', not story-driven experiences for adults. Their righteous indignation ensures that they completely miss the point and the substandard, one-sided reporting means they don't actually even speak to the people whose opinions would matter most. *Actual soldiers.*

People play games to do things they otherwise could not. I'm don't have the skills to play for the Socceroos. Crushing the rest of the world with them in *FIFA 11*, however, is thrilling. Similarly, I don't have the right stuff to join the army. Virtual combat, however, is exciting.

Developers make war gamers because people want to play them. People want to play war games because they're exciting.

To outsiders, soldiers – like elite sportspeople and racing drivers – have exciting jobs. It's that simple.

It's not about disrespect. It's certainly not about disregarding the fallen.

Hell, even the military advisor for *Call of Duty* has come to the defence of *Medal of Honor*. Lieutenant colonel (retired) Hank Keirse, who has worked on *Call of Duty* titles for some years (including the upcoming *Call of Duty: Black Ops*), told *Eurogamer* "the game and others like it may lead to a greater respect from young people towards soldiers."

A veteran of the First Gulf War and former Chief of Military Training at West Point, Keirse mentioned Operation Anaconda, the real-life 2002 op where Allied forces attempted to destroy Taliban forces in the Shahi-Kot Valley, Afghanistan. *Medal of Honor* is based around this stoush.

"Anaconda was a hell of a battle," Keirse told *Eurogamer*. "I know the developer over there – we actually proposed that idea at one point. I remember that battle, so me and my other co-worker suggested it because it was a hell of a fight."

"That battle is over. Just like World War II

is over. And there are all kinds of lessons to be learned from it, all kinds of elements of human courage... mistakes."

Some of these articles go so far as to mention the extremely troubled title *Six Days in Fallujah* while looking for more dirt on videogames that 'trivialise' the conflict in the Middle East. This is misguided.

Developer Atomic Games was developing training tools for the US Marine Corps and was assigned some Marines from Third Battalion First Marines to assist. Some months into development, however, Third Battalion First Marines was deployed in Iraq and participated in the Battle of Fallujah. When they came back from Fallujah they asked Atomic to create something that showed players what it was really like to be there. A gritty and authentic squad-focused survival experience – complete with real life Marines lending their names and likenesses.

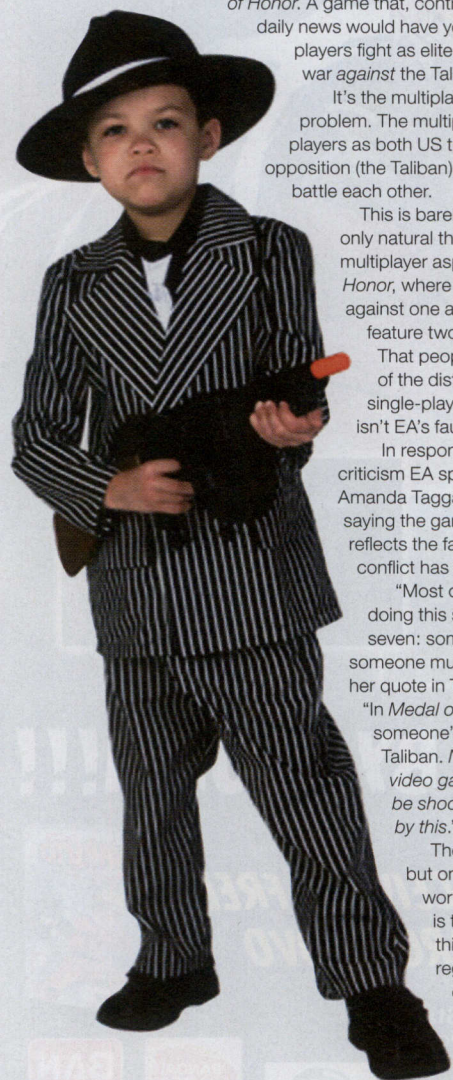
“To outsiders, soldiers – like elite sportspeople and racing drivers – have exciting jobs. It's that simple”

"There are things that you can do in video games that you cannot do in other forms of media," Atomic Games president Peter Tamte told Joystiq. "And a lot of that has to do with presenting players with the dilemmas that the Marines saw in Fallujah and then giving them the choice of how to handle that dilemma."

Unfortunately, a kneejerk stink about the game was brewed up by a bunch of interfering jerks and the story these soldiers wanted displayed has been jerked out from under us and may remain untold. If *Six Days in Fallujah* were a film there wouldn't have been a single ripple of controversy.

Of course, time is the only real difference between *Medal of Honor* and a great many other multiplayer games of its ilk. Players have been cast as German and Japanese soldiers in the multiplayer portions of WWII-era games for years. This casting of players as enemy forces in multiplayer to 'battle' one another is necessary in context.

Why hasn't the same fuss been raised over similar shooters in recent years? "Military groups outraged over Nazi war game" and "Dead soldiers' families outraged as EA allows gamers to fight for Nazis".





OFFICIAL
PLAYSTATION
ANGRY SACKBOY

It's hypocritical that it hasn't.

While we're on the topic, however, how has the *Modern Warfare* series avoided a similar shitstorm? Semantics. Activision only identifies the Middle East-based opponents in the *Modern Warfare* series as an organisation called OpFor. Their nationality is never explicitly stated, even though (in *Modern Warfare 2*, at least) they fight out of Afghanistan and dress like Taliban insurgents.

I was always taught that if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it's a duck. They may not have called them the Taliban, but that's sure as hell who they are. OpFor

(which is actually a military term for an opposing force; a military unit tasked with representing an enemy, usually for training purposes in war game scenarios) isn't fooling anyone, is it?

Apparently, yes.

In other news, cops 'n robbers is just cops now. Bad guys don't exist anymore. You can thank the cotton-wool brigade for that one.

Angry Sackboy has got soul but he ain't a soldier. That said, he respects those who are. Keep your heads down.



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COMPETITIONS

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Thanks to good guys at Namco Bandai Partners and the handsome folk at Madman Entertainment we have a huge *Naruto* and *Dragon Ball Z* game and prize pack to give away!

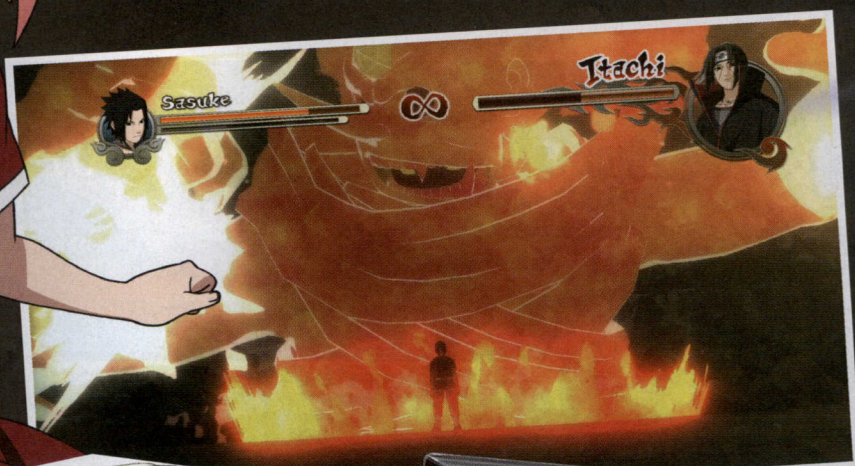
One lucky winner will win an enormous DVD collection valued at \$919.95 from Madman Entertainment, which contains the *Dragon Ball Z Remastered Movie Collection (Uncut)* with all 15 DBZ movies in one box, plus the *Dragon Ball Z Remastered Uncut Complete Collection* with all nine seasons of DBZ, AND the *Naruto Complete Collection* with all 220 episodes. Wow!

Five runners up also get a copy of the Collector's Edition of *Naruto Shippuden Ultimate Ninja Storm 2* from Namco Bandai Partners for their PS3,

valued at \$109.95 each. Along with the game you also get exclusive laser cel art designed by the original author of the manga: Masashi Kishimoto, an original soundtrack of the video game, and DLC of the character Minato. The game takes players through the *Naruto Shippuden* story arc with new battle systems, and players must choose the right companions to fight alongside them, and together unleash explosive Team Special Techniques to lay waste to opponents.

For your chance to take home the complete adventures of Goku and Vegeta, as well as *Naruto Uzumaki*, answer this question and follow the entry instructions below.

Question: In 50 words or less, what ninja fighting words would you say before defeating your arch-nemesis? Hint: the more ridiculous and cheesier the better.



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HOW TO ENTER

To enter Official PlayStation Magazine competitions email your entries to ops@citrusmedia.com.au with the name of the competition ONLY in the subject line. Email entries are entitled to one entry (multiple entries will be deleted!). Alternatively, send clearly marked postal entries to **OPS competitions PO Box 20154, World Square, NSW, 2002**. Please include your name, age and address with your answer on the back of an envelope. Chance plays no part in determining winners. Competitions close 20/11/2010. Winners will be notified by mail.

HARD AS A ROCK LETTER OF THE MONTH

Greetings to the wonderful people at *OPS Australia* and congratulations on the awesome mag. Recently I was absolutely bored out of my mind waiting for good games to come out and I had an idea.

A long time ago in a house far, far, away I had just brought home my pre-order copy of *Borderlands* and couldn't wait to play it. I'm 30 minutes in and thoroughly enjoying the gameplay/characters. Then after I beat Nine-tails I kept getting mowed down repetitively by Bonehead.

After about 16 tries with no progress – I saved, ejected and cast it into the dark depths of my give-ups pile (possibly to resell to some shmuck later on). But eventually I couldn't take the boredom anymore so I reluctantly inserted the disc and had another go at it.

This time round I noticed that next to Bonehead's name was a level indicator, naturally I realised I had to kill about 80 skags to get my level up and get past them. After that I flew through the game so fast it was like I was Sonic on speed.

This made me wonder, we all have our pile of shame no matter what the size. Usually this is relatively close to the weight of all the coins we spend on arcade games that we don't end up completing/beating eg: *Space Invaders*, *Galaga*, *Pac-man* or *Donkey Kong*.

So with all the varying ranges of gaming prowess in the general public, not considering the ability to choose your difficulty in games and based on the



Pictured: three explosions. This will make sense in a moment

evolution of difficulty of games within the past 45 years. Should new games aim to be easier or harder?

Tate Pryor, via email

Tate, you've touched upon a topic that is close to the place where our heart would be if we had one.

Difficulty in a game is an elusive thing to nail down properly and we think all games should still have a difficulty select at the start, no matter how arthouse the developers want to appear.

What interested us the most from your letter is the fact that you came back to a game that was annoying you to find that you could enjoy it all over again.

True, technically, Bonehead did have a level meter next to him, but you'd been playing for a while and the lateral part of your thinking machine had shutdown due to some boredom.

We have short attention spans ourselves and understand completely. Why, we've had to come back to writing this response four times because the word 'explosion' hasn't occurred in every paragraph.

Five times now.

We urge all gamers to take your example and not trade-in games willy-nilly. With a bit of patience and the right frame of mind almost any game can redeem itself and be worthy of a second chance. Any game except *Rogue Warrior* that is.



Letter of the Month wins a copy of: **MEDAL OF HONOR**

Congratulations from EA and us, Tate! Stop shaving now!

CUTTINGS

SHORT SHORTS

Okay, still in Germany and while I was on a tram I went past a gaming store! Inside there was a *Tomb Raider* outfit! It was AWESOME! Lexie Batman Taylor, via Facebook

Tomb Raider outfits are awesome.

MONEY SAVER

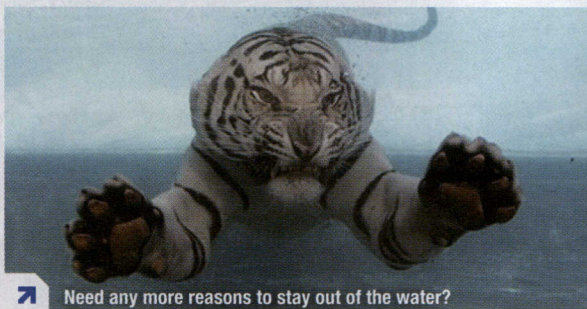
I like it when there are more shit games out than good ones. It means I can spend less money on games! Josef Barker, via Facebook

Interesting philosophy.

FUTURE PERFECT

Big ups to *OPS*, not only did they print my letter, they included a picture from *Back to the Future II*. One of my favorite movies ever! You guys rock! Jeremy Scott, via Facebook

Great Scott!



Need any more reasons to stay out of the water?

NOT ALL THINGS GO SWIMMINGLY

Dear good folk of *OPS*,

I've recently been playing the demo for *Mafia II* and would like to know what is up with game devs being scared of water? I know these games are hard to make, but surely they could spend some time making water not equal certain death. I mean, they make it look so good I just wanna go jump in and swim! Anyhoo, I still pre-ordered the game, it looks awesome and it should be a good story. Love the mag people keep up the great work. Oliver Josephs, via email

Why do devs fear water? Polygon shrinkage. That or lack of time.

DON'T JUST HEAR, LISTEN MORE

Hello *OPS*, great mag,

I'd like to add my opinion on a subject some developers tend to forget; the little things. You know, those little features in games that just "happen" to not make it, for example: *Scott Pilgrim* not adding drop in/drop out, *Modern Warfare 2* not showing legs. Some of these issues actually cost games points in reviews, I suppose, which sucks.

I mean imagine handing in a job application and losing the job for forgetting something as simple as your last name. Developers really need to pay more attention, what did they expect, for us to just forget about these features? I admit that adding legs in *MW2* wouldn't have made better sales but it would have shown that the developers care, and actually listen. Saed Batshoan, via email

We hear you Saed, we like legs in our first-person shooters (even though we can never, ever shoot off our own kneecaps – try as we might).

While the little things don't take large chunks out of a games final score, they can make an experience special. Like the suicide function in *Tobal No.1* – a fighting game on PSX that would have been utterly

SPEAK TO US!

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on *OPS*, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

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generic otherwise. Essentially you could make the robot fighter, Hom, switch himself off and forfeit the match (and his life). Sure that little touch was utterly useless in the long run, but it was a cool point of difference that stuck in our memory long after we decided to frisbee the disc over the highway.

In modern times, we were also mightily impressed by the tiny touches present in *Mafia II*, like the way a car's exhaust smoke would light up red whenever we applied the brakes and the fact that there were little scripted stories hidden around every corner. Even though those events weren't tied to a voyeurism trophy, we searched them out and they made both the world and the experience that much richer.

The little things do matter developers, and if you manage to put enough of them in there they will almost certainly add up to something amazing.



PRO PRICEPOINT

Howdy OPS?!

Love the mag, good job, yadda yadda. I'm a huge fan of my rhythm games (*DJ Hero*, *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band*), but recently I have found that my love for them has hit a bit of a roadblock.

I've just seen how much the *Rock Band 3* pro instruments are and I've only just come back around from the minor heart attack. The pro guitar is just shy of 300 clams, the pro drums follow suit and the keytar is around 140 bananas as well. What's worse is that I see that all of these instruments are exclusive to only one particular game retailer. Which is a great windfall for them, but for poor shlubs like me it translates into "we can charge what we want and nobody can say boo or undercut us. Now hand over your wallet and dance for your peripherals, fool. *Dance!*"

Now, the dancing part of the equation isn't too much of a problem (like I said, I like rhythm games) but I simply can't afford to rock *Rock Band 3* to it's fullest at these prices. And it hurts.

Luke Paulson, via email

We share your pain. *Rock Band 3* obviously supports all existing *Rock Band* gear but these new instruments are clearly the best way to enjoy this new generation music game. Most of us in the office are sizing each other up for the inevitable fight to the death for first dibs on any pro instruments that arrive in the office for review purposes. The benefits of being inside this industry are often offset by the fear of death at the hands of your peers.

We agree that the exclusivity of the instruments is a major blow for bargain hunting hagglers who know how to play two major retailers off against each other.

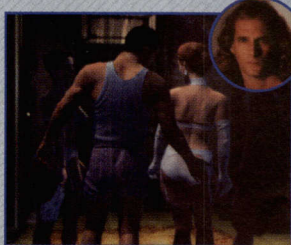
Some of the writers here are planning on waiting around for a few months hoping for a price drop. Others are considering some kind of heist involving a van. Adam is hoping for the hobo-beard-pity-discount.

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If you're on Facebook and you read the mag (which you're doing *right now*), join our fan page for exclusive competitions, breaking news and intelligent banter with other gamers, fans and the guys who make this award-winning publication. Search for *Official PlayStation Magazine - Australia*, or go to facebook.com/OPSAustralia, and get involved!

STOREFRONT

We play the games so you can pick the cream from the crock. What deliciousness have you bought lately?



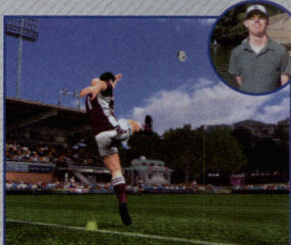
Jimmy Rocky Falo
Mafia II

"It doesn't really introduce anything new that I haven't seen or played before, but it is a fun and excellent game."



Wade Rushton
Shank

"It's so good and inspired by something new and fresh. I love the cel shading too!"



Paul Davis
Rugby League Live

"I am an NRL freak. First impressions are not too bad."



Steven Charleson
Ratchet & Clank: Tools of Destruction

"The PS2 games were great and I picked it up cheap. It definitely needs a multiplayer mode though."

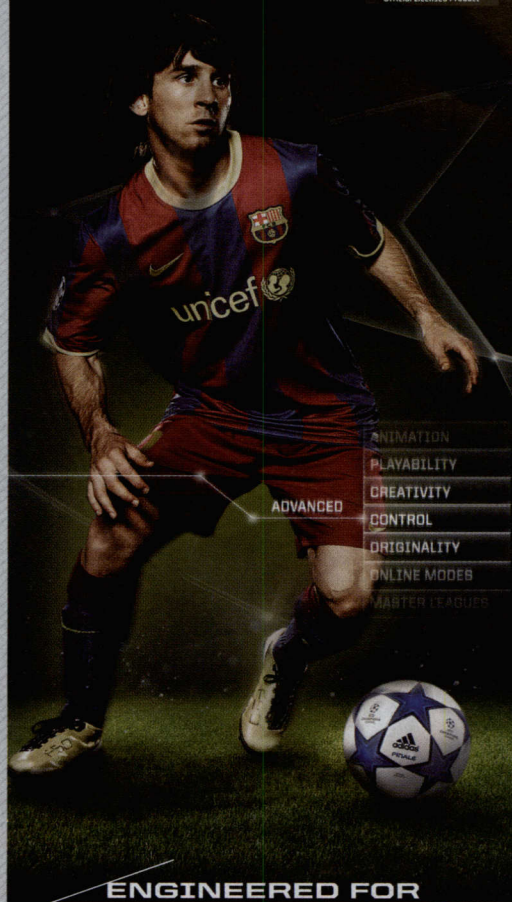
CAPTION THIS!

We're just as surprised as you are that this is an official screen for the not-exactly-good *Kung Fu Rider*, but it's perfect caption fodder, especially for Alan Peck.



Insert Yakety Sax here

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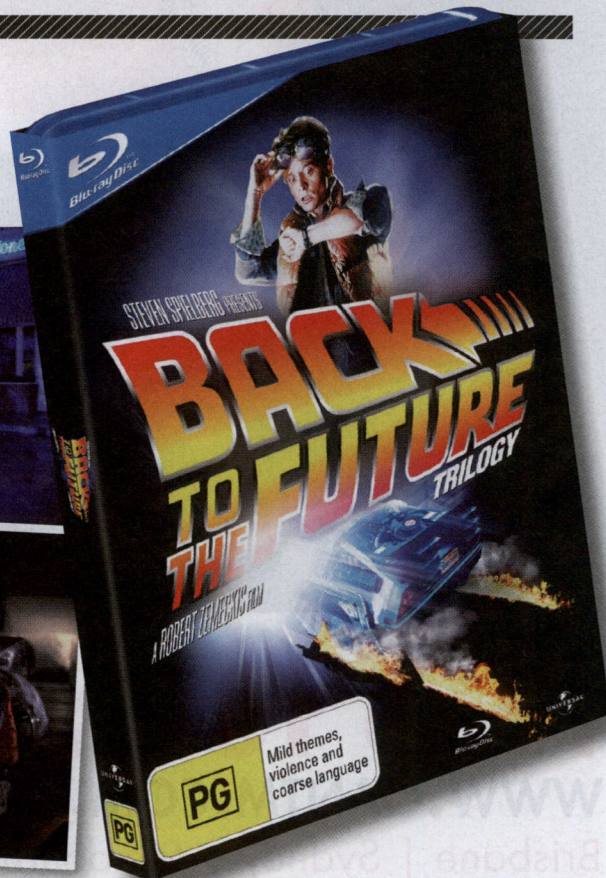
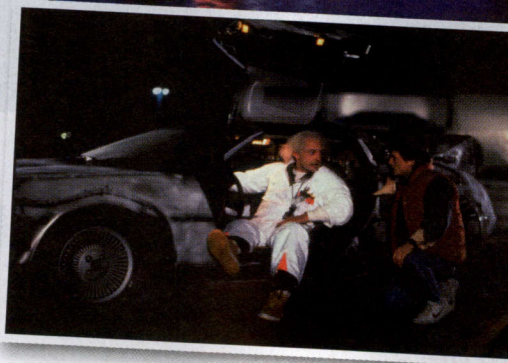
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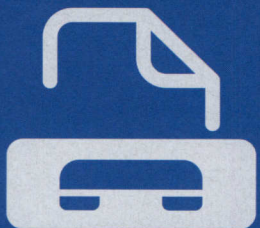
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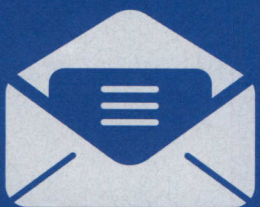
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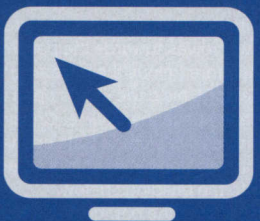
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INCOMING

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: ACTION | EXPECTED RELEASE: TBA 2011
DISTRIBUTOR: WARNER BROS. | DEVELOPER: ROCKSTEADY STUDIOS | PLAYERS: 1

BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

Where does he get those wonderful toys?

According to a documentary we watched called *Escape From New York*, 1997 was a much radder year than we remembered it. Though we completely missed the memo, 13 years ago the crime rate in the US shot up a whopping 400%. Understandably, this prompted the US government to ditch all of their criminals in the Big Apple and create a psycho playpen surrounded by a 15-metre-high containment wall.

Man, we love when the system works.

Inside this facility it was every inmate for himself and, as you can imagine, in order to stay alive groups of murderers instinctively formed gangs run by enigmatic, oddball leaders (like the guy who voiced *South Park*'s Chef, for example). Interestingly, the re-enactment also featured an infiltration by a vigilante who had an unnatural obsession with snakes (and who must now be living large off the royalty cheques he gets from Hideo Kojima).

Rocksteady Studios has ingeniously co-opted the past and carbon-copied it

THE PITCH

It's Gotham City meets *Escape From New York*.



Bat-B.O.: It's, like, B.B.O.

as its premise for the sequel to *Batman: Arkham Asylum*. A large swath of Gotham City's slums have been fenced in as an urban prison and all of the thugs held within are unifying under the command of the various charismatic super villains. Right on cue, a guy who is unnaturally fixated on a single animal – in this case bats – decides to gate-crash the penitentiary and make history live again.

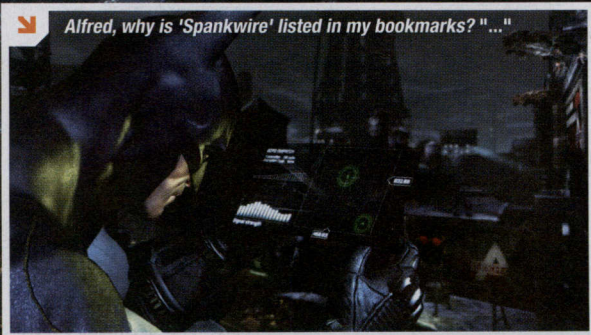
Descending into this sequel like a proverbial bat is quite a dizzying experience. Perched high atop a building overlooking Gotham's prison city is a scene unlike anything we beheld in the first game. The cold night wind whips up small particles of snow into the night sky and deep below Batman are roaming groups of ne'er do wells tearing up the city (and each other) for fun. The feeling of being completely isolated and well within

harm's way has been superbly captured.

After receiving a short radio mission-brief from Alfred, *Arkham City* proceeds to thoroughly impress us like a work experience kid in a license plate factory. The Dark Knight pitches himself off the skyscraper ledge and swan dives towards the pavement like Ezio Auditore (minus the haystack). At the last second, his cape snaps open and he rockets back above the skyline. Cruising at an impressive altitude Bats continues to propel himself along with grappling gun bolts shot into the buildings below.

It isn't the paragliding mechanic that sets our faces to 'stunned' – we did that in *Just Cause 2* – we're wooed by the sight of open-world streets and the endless navigational possibilities that fly in the face of the environs of the last game. According to Rocksteady,

Alfred, why is 'Spankwire' listed in my bookmarks? "..."





42 FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS
Hands-on with the first hour of this behemoth of an RPG!



44 MASS EFFECT 2
The sci-fi action RPG against which all others are now measured comes to PS3!



46 BRINK
The future blockbuster that is promising to push shooters to the edge!



48 RATCHET & CLANK: ALL 4 ONE
Multiple organisms equals four-player fun



BAT VERSUS CAT

In this sequel (and 'Arkham-verse') Batman and Catwoman are very uneasy half-allies who are still gauging one another. There is rivalry and a hint of romance in their relationship and we may very well see the sparks fly between them. From what we can tell Batman is tolerating her presence in Gotham City and he may even need to rely upon her when the game's new antagonist (Two Face) gets the upper hand.

its goal is to provide a vast crime-fighting utopia that is bursting with attention to detail, a variety of missions to undertake and a story around every corner. It's touting Arkham City as an expansive world that is going to be as richly detailed and enthralling as Arkham Island was. Given the team's talent and what has been shown so far, we have no cause to doubt them.

As far as fighting mechanics go, *Arkham Asylum* hit the goons squarely on the head. The team has opted to build upon the already solid foundation by adding a bunch of new surprises for your enemies, including multiple

simultaneous counters, gadget use during fights and a nifty projectile counter that has you snatching objects thrown at you and resending it back at the jerk who tossed it. The Caped Crusader is now hideously outnumbered in this prison and any fight you get involved in will be about shrewd crowd control tactics and target prioritisation.

For example, if a gun-totting crim is hassling you, you'd do well to vault over his shoulder, spray his kidneys with explosive gel and detonate him when his buddies close ranks around him. If two of those enemies should escape the blast and try to punch you at the same time, you should use your new double-counter to palm both incoming fists and crushes their knuckles. If the screams of the recently bitchslapped draw the attention of another nearby gang, we'd recommend summoning a swarm of bats to your position. The resulting chaos will cause some of your assailants to crap themselves and run, at the very least they will be left hopelessly disorientated and ripe for a Bat-battering.

These new skills extend to Batman's more cerebral purists too. Your blue-tinted detective vision has been upgraded and the puzzles you piece together will be much more complex. This tactical info obviously helps immeasurably when you have to analyse any situation and take foes out silently. Grappling to a ledge underneath a potential mark now lets you instantly flip into a roll that maintains forward momentum to

speedily close the distance with your prey. Sidle up behind your enemy and you can unleash a chokehold mechanic that, if timed correctly with a secondary button tap, can make the baddies faint quick-smart.

It's difficult not to get excited about this sequel. The somewhat linear blinkers of *Arkham Asylum* appear to have been stripped away completely and there's a whole host of nefarious new villains to beat down. Also, Rocksteady has stated an intention to not rest upon its laurels and churn out an 'Arkham Asylum 1.5'. We think they're well on the way to creating an enthralling experience that'll prove to be as inescapable as present-day New York and just as 'A-number-1' as the Duke who runs the place. **Adam Mathew**

Harley estimates the length of the Batawang



THEY SAY

"This isn't 'Arkham 1.5'. We want to make the same jump we made from nothing to *Arkham Asylum*."

WE SAY

Sequels have been given a bad rap over the years. This could buck the trend. *Arkham Asylum* was one of the most surprisingly good titles this generation.

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING

INCOMING



"And just when victory seemed assured, I lost my quarry in the centrefold"

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: RPG | EXPECTED RELEASE: OCTOBER 2010

DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDA/BETHESDA | DEVELOPER: OBSIDIAN | PLAYERS: 1

FALLOUT: NEW VEGAS

Sometimes you gotta roll a hard six

THE PITCH

The fan-favourite radiation fuelled franchise takes an interesting turn concentrating a revamped palette, companion interactions, and dialogue in a brand new setting.

The heat was staggering. Sweat dripped from our every pore. Shaking our head, we groggily awoke and attempted to open our eyes. Sunlight pierced through our lids, obscuring our vision as a blurred desert wasteland greeted us. A horrifying apparition appeared.

The entity was large and grotesque, deformed and misshapen. He was speaking in some language we could barely understand. Where were we? What happened? As we pieced it together, the puzzle became clear. The entity was a heavy set PC gamer babbling in some indecipherable compu-speak and we were in Dallas, Texas, at QuakeCon, to get an "hour in any damned direction you want" hands-on with the latest segment of the irradiated post apocalyptic adventure known as *Fallout*. But the *New Vegas* edition begins a little differently. Where *Fallout 3* commenced at the beginning of your life, *Fallout: New Vegas* puts you at the other end of the spectrum – beginning with your death. Sort of.

As *New Vegas* commences, a wave of familiarity descends. Steadfast narrator Ron

Perlman begins serenading with a sad lullaby, this grim tale of mankind's future. "War. War never changes." War sure as hell may not, but the end result certainly does. Looks like Mojave rolled the dice and came up lucky seven, with most of the atomic payload only cursing the earth around it, not detonating within. Vegas is a warhead-free zone. Gone is *Fallout 3*'s sickly green tinge that may have made you want to hurl after prolonged exposure. Welcome to colour, dear friends.

The new vibrant palette is a welcome change and immediately sets a different tone. That's pretty much the *New Vegas* mantra. To the naked eye it seems the same, but the subtle changes make a world of difference. The colour, the depth to your interaction with companions, the nuances and expanded dialogue brought in by Obsidian Entertainment, the classic Vegas – and slightly Mafioso feel – it's a kind of same same but different feeling. Those initially discounting it as a mere expansion pack would be sorely mistaken, delve deeper and you'll see nothing is quite like a Vegas experience.



The post apocalypse will be phallic

As we've previously stated, the game begins with your death. Vegas style. A desert grave and three goons telling you the deck was stacked and you never stood a chance. Two are giggling like hyenas, but the leader is cut from 1980s Casino cloth, as his David Jones-styled blazer reinforced. Before you ask, boom, crack, double tap.

After regaining consciousness in a surgery of sorts, you are greeted by the kind face of Doc Mitchell, medical practitioner of Goodsprings. He tells us that a Securitron dug us up and unceremoniously delivered us to his waiting arms. We caught up with said robot, Robco, later on and thanked him for his efforts. He's got a *Lost in Space* look with a television screen in his chest depicting a classically animated Roy Rogers puffing a cigarette – brilliant!

As the Doc droned on about the state we were in and helped us set up our character

TROPHY CASE

As always, a Trophy list has hit the web and we have to say we dig where Obsidian is heading. Many focus on the new abilities, like the more in-depth companion wheel and many have a Vegas-centric feel with a gambling motif carrying through. Some of the more noteworthy ones are "The Courier Who Broke the Bank" for getting banned from all the Strip's casinos, "You Run Barter Town" unlocked after selling 10,000 caps worth of goods (with a nod to *Beyond Thunderdome*), "New Vegas Samurai" by inflicting 10,000 damage with melee weapons and by gaining new BFFs you'll unlock "The Whole Gang's Here" when you recruit all companions.

via an old school "Love Tester", some ink blot tests and word association games, we got distracted. We knew that voice. As major sci-fi geeks it took about two seconds to connect the dots. It was Michael Hogan, also known as Commander Tigh from the revamped *Battlestar Galactica* series. It was a fantastic departure for the gruff as nails boozy XO, and the softness to his performance made it difficult to shoot him in the head and ransack his domicile. Yep, you *can* do that if you want but the massive red text that accompanies any such action strongly dissuades such behaviour. They make it easy for you to want to be a good guy and generally make you feel like a prick if you don't.

Michael Hogan isn't the only celebrity lending their vocal

scrapings to *New Vegas* either. Mathew Perry, and crooner Wayne Newton also play pivotal roles, as do Zachery Levi (from TV's *Chuck*) and the hardest damn Mexican on the planet, Danny Trejo. Trejo, starring in the upcoming *Machete*, plays your companion Raul, and we can't wait to see his take on a ghou. But back to Goodsprings.

While most of our industry brethren bolted towards Primm to get as far through as possible, your buddies at OPS took a different path. After pimping out our smoking hot female lead we chose to focus on speech and bartering to see what new directions the dialogue trees would offer. A silver-tongued hottie with energy weapons seemed just the way to go. After ignoring the tutorial quest with the porn star named Sunny Smiles, we searched the town and found it in the midst of upheaval. Apparently a self-important little douche-nozzle, Cobb, has been throwing threats about willy-nilly, demanding the kindly bar owner Trudy turn over a muppet by the name of Ringo. Do we join the obnoxious

Cobb and the Powder Gang and wreak havoc on town or stand up for truth, hotness and the Vegas way?

We met with Ringo and told him we had his back. After working our feminine wiles on the majority of the town (convincing Sunny and

Trudy to side with us, talking our way into some stim-paks from the Doc and working our bartering magic for a 100% discount from Chet, the general store owner) we stood united ready to repel the Powder Gang attack.

The results were fairly predictable as we spanked the gang and summarily executed Cobb. The charge: attempted idiocy with a deadly weapon. We were awarded with "vilified" status with the Powder Gang via the faction system, a new addition to the series, for our efforts.

Still, we marvelled at how it easily could have gone either way. We *could* have sided with Cobb and wiped the sleepy town off the map for good. *Something* would've come from it – we just didn't have a chance to find out what. That's what makes the *Fallout* series so appealing. You play how you want to play. Be the hero, be the villain, or walk somewhere in between. As the sun set on our hands-on we sat there just mulling over the possibilities. Come October, you will too. **Dave Kozicki**

THEY SAY

"Survival is a key theme of the game, not just for you, but for the characters living in the world"

WE SAY

An hour's worth of play in an RPG is never enough but it certainly has whet our appetites to take another jaunt in New Vegas. The game's release is a mere few weeks away.

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL.
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING

"Gimme an appletini, and go easy on the tin!"

Tablecloths: is there anybody they can't clothe?

COMING

Dean Domin...
KING OF SHANE
GREAT ORCHESTR...



INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: RPG | EXPECTED RELEASE: 2011
DISTRIBUTOR: EA | DEVELOPER: BIOWARE | PLAYERS: 1

MASS EFFECT 2

It's worse than that – he's dead, Jim

THE PITCH

A gripping *Star Trek*/*Star Wars* Odyssey



"Captain's log, stardate April 13th... point two. I am continuing to assemble a crack-team of interstellar space mercs in order to thwart an evil force threatening humanity and indeed the entire galaxy itself. My most recent recruit is a reptilian Krogan who constantly reminds me that his species come standard with two hearts, four lungs, and four enormous testicles. Am fighting feelings of inadequacy while attempting to focus my considerable intellect on more pressing priorities. I still can't find reverse."

Few exclusives that appear on rival consoles catch our eye, but *Mass Effect* was

an exception to the rule. Crafted by RPG luminaries BioWare the original *Mass Effect* slid you into the space boots of Commander Shepard, a human soldier in charge of an elite squad and a prototype starship, the SSV Normandy. The year is 2183 and humanity has only recently reached out to the stars and made contact with other life forms via mysterious light-travel devices called Mass Relays. The main story revolved around Shepard's quest to find and stop a rogue galactic agent (called a Spectre), to blast hordes of AI killbots called The Geth, to unravel the riddle of a precursor race and ultimately save the galaxy from a life-

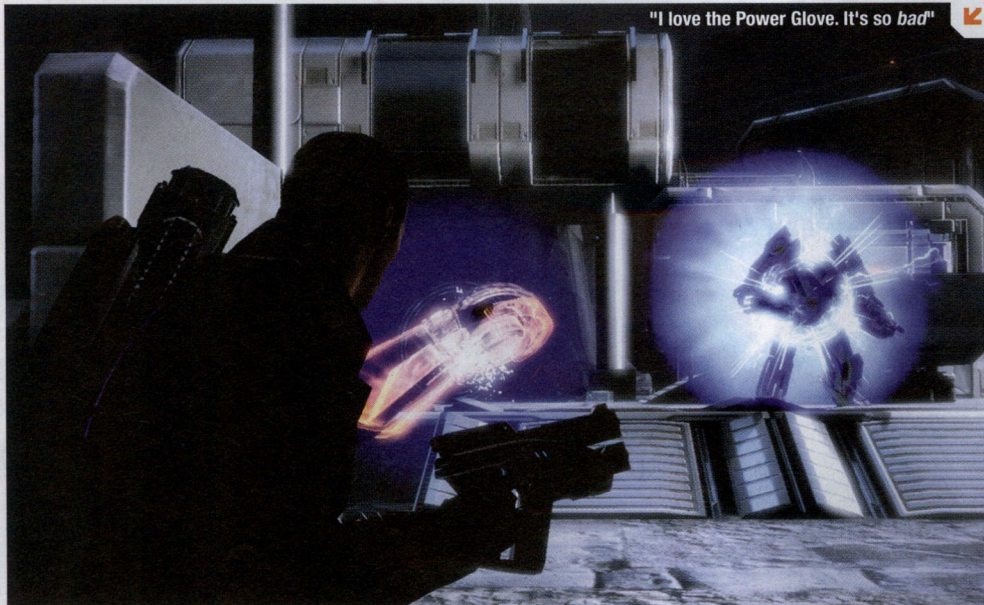
terminating force called The Reapers.

Now we know what you're thinking, this all sounds like a mash-up of every space opera ever inspired by *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*. That's a true enough appraisal of the situation, but the fact remains that it's still a cool premise for a videogame.

Think about it. You get to slovenly recline on your bridge and watch a big TV screen that flings you to the farthest reaches of the galaxy. You get to land on a large selection of unsurveyed planets, inform the indigenous life you "come in peace" and then shoot to kill. You get to become a part of an elite group of interstellar special agents. Last but not least, when you have meaningful conversations with your crew it can often lead to you knocking space boots with them. Hell, even the species barrier won't stop you from boldly going where no man (or woman) has gone before.

Mass Effect 2 – obviously – resumes the continuing voyages of commander Shepard, which is our first point of contention with starting this franchise halfway on PS3. The original *Mass Effect* let you custom create your own Shepard to your preferred sex and facial appearance and the theory was

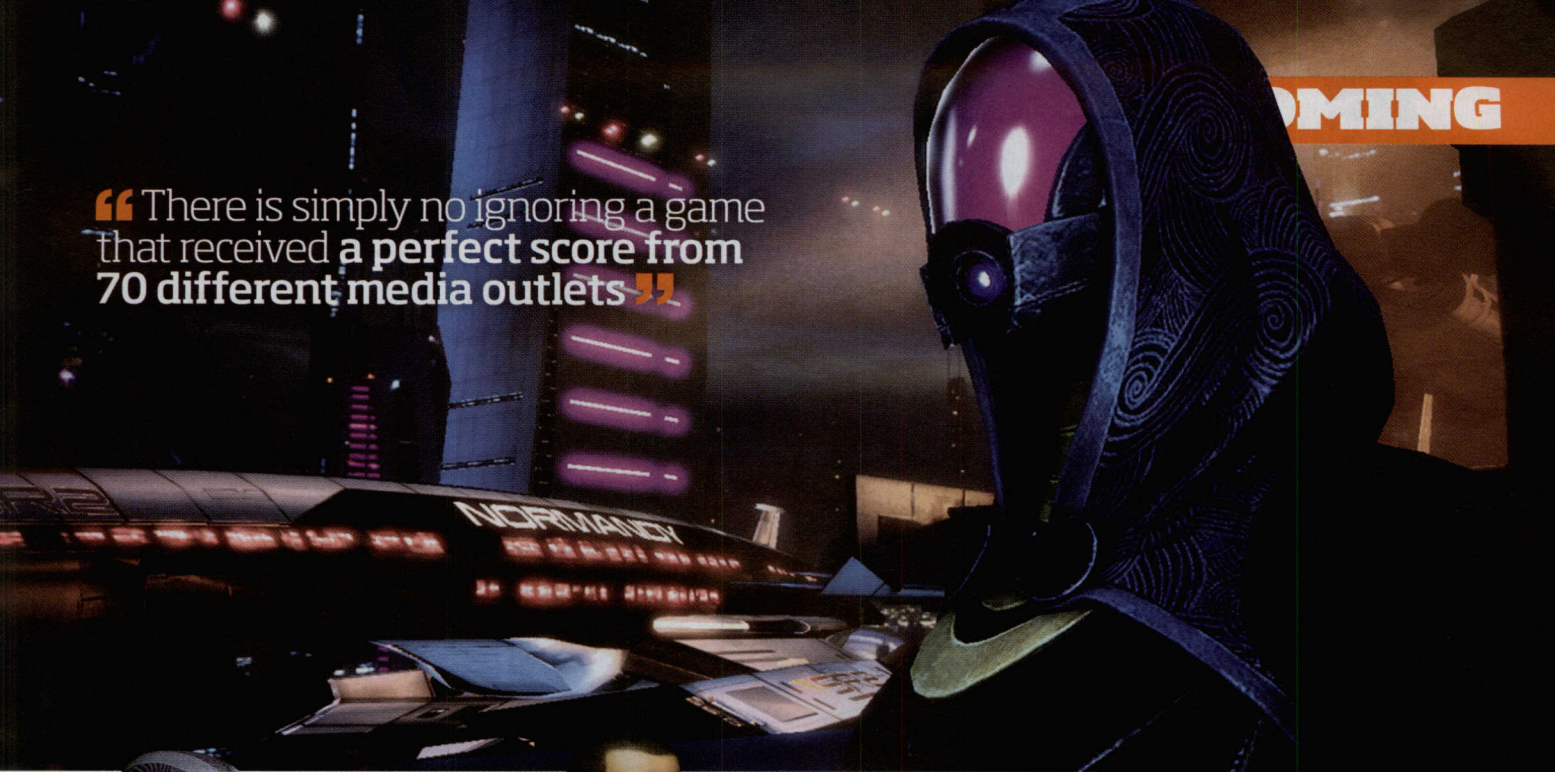
"I love the Power Glove. It's so bad"



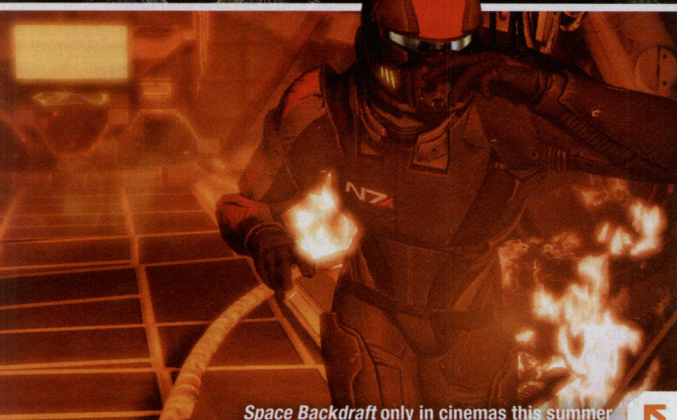
THE REAL COLLECTORS

Since its release on PC the code of *Mass Effect 2* has been snooped through by a group of diehard BioWare fans. What they found were links to content that didn't quite make the final cut. These included five codex entries detailing awesome new weapon technology, a dozen new galactic news broadcasts and additional locations and missions at places called Arvuna, Asteria, Rosh and Susskind Station. Will these mysterious extras be reattached to the experience and unleashed exclusively in the PS3 version? We hope so.

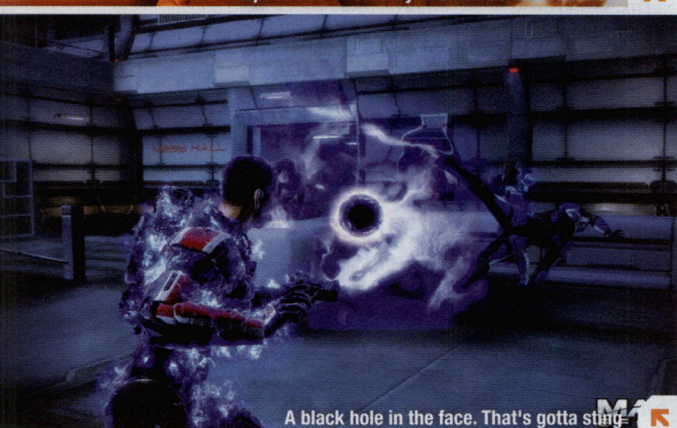
“There is simply no ignoring a game that received a perfect score from 70 different media outlets”



We come in peace, shoot to kill, shoot to kill



Space Backdraft only in cinemas this summer



A black hole in the face. That's gotta sting

In space no one can escape their own farts

finely crafted the narrative is and how much it convinces you that you are your character. It's not just the heart-pumping third-person firefights or the addictive XP levelling up that are responsible for the feeling, though they certainly contribute. It's the multi-branching conversations and a snap-decision mechanic that will convince you that every move you make comes with consequence and that you're not just playing a game, you're participating in a universe.

If exposition and yackety-yack isn't your bag you'll be happy to know that *Mass Effect 2* has a very decent real-time combat system. It's faster paced than you might imagine and comes complete with cover mechanics, biotic attacks (read: gnarly Force powers), tactically aware enemies and the satisfying ragdolling of enemies who have just copped a blast from your space shotgun. Also, if you're having a conversation and the other guy is giving you lip, you're sometimes given the option to slug them in the chops mid-sentence or blast them in the face with your pistol. Argument: won.

We can understand the more hardcore Sony crowd out there being dubious about *Mass Effect 2* as truly the old hatreds of rival console exclusives run deep. That said, exceptions need to be made and there is simply no ignoring a game that received a perfect score from 70 different media outlets. There has to be something right about this one. **Adam Mathew**

THEY SAY

"An epic science fiction adventure set in a vast universe filled with dangerous aliens and mysterious, uncharted planets"

WE SAY

We can't really argue with that. If you loved the rich storytelling of BioWare's *Dragon Age*, you'd best check this out too

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING

that you'd import that into *Mass Effect 2*. Clearly that won't be an option for us PS3 enthusiasts.

But the problem also runs deeper than custom polygonal skin. Throughout the first game you were forced to make meaningful choices that regularly determined the fates of a tonne of NPC characters and even the life expectancy of your team mates. Part of the allure of *Mass Effect 2* is seeing familiar faces pop up and how your past decisions have shaped the galaxy. Unfortunately, it looks like we could be cheated out of that intoxicating sensation.

Although details on the PlayStation 3 version of *Mass Effect 2* are few and far between, BioWare CEO Ray Muzyka has said that the PS3 version of *Mass Effect 2* will boast "hours of bonus content." Mind you, he didn't elaborate on what the content will dig into. If we had to hazard a guess, we'd say that statement encapsulates all of the existing DLC content currently available in the wild. This consists of a bonus heist mission with an enigmatic thief, some 'equaliser' and 'aegis' packs that come chock full of sweet weaponry, the 'overlord' mission on a creepy space station, and even a bonus scenario where you'll track down a mysterious 'Shadow Broker' character.

If that additional content isn't enough to stop you from rage-quitting this review, just wait, because *Mass Effect 2* has many other wiles to woo you with. The facet that will strike you most about the game is how



He's going down. No butts about it



"Hey, can't you read?"



"You boys better be playing nice back there"



BUFF UP!

We've mentioned *Brink's* heavy focus on teamwork and its objective based play, mirroring on some level *Battlefield: Bad Company 2*, but there's more to it than that. On top of working through primary and secondary objectives with your team, you can also give them a little helping hand. Each class (soldier, medic, engineer and operative) has a specific 'buff' that they can distribute to their team-mates, whether it's extra ammo, an added health boost or more damage dealt by your weapons. It's just another way that Splash Damage is encouraging, nay forcing, players to lose this "one-man wolf pack" mentality. Bravo!

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** ACTION | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** MID 2011
DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT | **DEVELOPER:** SPLASH DAMAGE | **PLAYERS:** 1-16

BRINK

Shooters just got a little SMARTer

THE PITCH

After catastrophic floods envelop the world as we know it two opposing sides battle for control of the last resource, The Ark, but nothing is as cut and dried as it seems.



Set in the near future, *Brink* kicks off with a bang. The game commences with an outbreak of conflict between two forces battling for control of a self-sustaining eco-system known as The Ark.

Brink supports eight player versus drop-in/drop-out co-op play. Two teams of two humans and six AI controlled team-mates went head to head in a level called Container City, a mesh of docks and a shanty town, bursting with colour and filled with nooks and crannies.

We were really itching to take *Brink's* vaunted SMART technology (Smooth Movement Across Random Terrain) for a spin. By holding down the SMART button you can leap over obstacles, slip into cover, wall jump, slide-kick all by simply holding down the button.

After taking the character customisation for a whirl we tweaked a few weapon mods and

got cracking. Round one had us defending, so our primary objective was pretty much "kill everything". Easy enough. This was a fantastic way to get accustomed to the ins and outs of each class and try out SMART.

Here's the thing though – we couldn't tell who we were up against. Seriously. We didn't know if they were an AI bot or a human player. Each opponent used SMART to negotiate through the area. Some camped and ducked behind cover while others flanked in twos to gain the upper hand. It really was something.

Each objective runs on a timer, so all we had to do was hold them off to win the level. And we did, with our adversaries completing about 50 per cent of the objectives. We then played as Security in a reversal of the scenario – and that's when the hands-on took a step up.

As we waited for the session to restart the ever-enthusiastic CEO of Splash Damage Paul Wedgwood stuck himself next to us and asked us our thoughts. As we began looking at our load out he began suggesting mods and perks. He stayed for the entire game and became a rapid-fire resource of different objectives to try or routes to take.

Our objectives were simple enough (and take note these were only the primary objectives, there are many more on offer). Blow open a gateway so that a security robot can get through, escort the robot through a hostile area, repair a crane to lift it over a crevasse, lift it over, continue to escort and defend as it cuts open a specific container with a biological prototype within. Relieve the Resistance of the prototype and deliver it to a chopper holding position. Easy peasy, right? With Wedgwood as our consultant confidence was high.

As one of our AI controlled team-mates took out the gate we took on the role as engineer, playing babysitter to the security

bot as it worked its way through the hot zone. Here's where the perks Wedgwood recommended really came into effect. We made sure to 'buff' each team-mate's weapon to increase damage, and then dropped turrets to dissuade a frontal attack and to let them know we weren't messing around.

The 'combat intuition' perk meant we were able to tell when someone had us in his or her sights (and a yellow marker also indicates the direction so we were able to SMART skedaddle away and get to some cover). Another perk we'd grabbed was 'self-resurrect', so as we lay there (supposedly dead) we marvelled that this perk allows you to stab yourself in the heart with Epinephrine – bringing you back to life with around half your health. Making the most of the opportunity we took out a few "we're pretty sure he's dead" defenders and made off with the biological agent as Wedgwood animatedly shouted directions, bolted back to the chopper and won the level.

You'll be hearing a lot more about it in the future. **Dave Kozicki**

THEY SAY

"We're looking to blur the lines between the single-player and online multiplayer experience with a dynamic mission structure"

WE SAY

We've played it and it runs like a dream. The AI on both sides of the fence is reactive and intelligent and SMART technology will change the way you play shooters.

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING





INFO

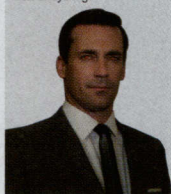
FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** ACTION | **DEVELOPER:** EIDOS MONTREAL
PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** 2011

DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION

This is your chance to change the world

THE PITCH

Mad metal men sneaking around, like if John Hamm was a cyborg.



Metal men with robot arms who wear sunnies at night. Everyone knows that much about *Human Revolution*. You should also know the series is famous for promoting choice, giving you many different tools for accomplishing your goal, whether you go in hot with guns ready, sneak your way in making as much noise as piece of lettuce, or charm your way through.

gamescom proved that this core concept is thriving, as the team guided Alex Jensen – a metal man with robot arms – through a level three times over to show off the game's versatility.

Going in heavily armed seems like a suicide run, as enemies are smart and packing big guns. You'll need your augmentations (body upgrades) at a truly decent spec to be able to cope with the onslaught, but it's an impressive

display of physical strength as items get flung around as make-shift projectiles and hopefully creating cover.

The silent way through isn't limited to turning yourself invisible. You'll also add a bit more speed to your pins to run past guards and in the most silent way possible, and clear chain-link fences with little fuss. Robots love robots, too, so you can hack into security cameras, bypass defences with an interesting minigame as you break through the system. Smartly you can also clear the game without firing your gun (save for boss encounters).

Then there's the charm offensive. Use your conversational skills to ween info out of guards and, incredibly, equip an aug that lets you read body language to get your way like Leonardo Di Caprio in *Catch Me If You Can*. This looks like game of the year material. **Paul Taylor**

THEY SAY

"In the not-so-distant future, the world is a place of great innovation and technological advancement... but also a place of chaos"

WE SAY

Dirty, grimy, high-tech and gorgeous. The preceding titles have created a world of intrigue where the philosophy is as important as the gameplay, and it's looking very smart.

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
 LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING

INFO

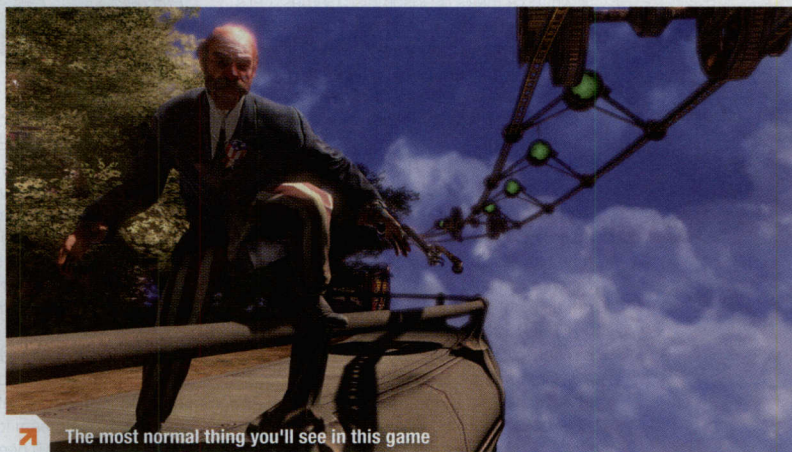
FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** SHOOTER | **DEVELOPER:** IRRATIONAL GAMES
PUBLISHER: 2K GAMES | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** 2012

BIOSHOCK INFINITE

Going beyond the sea

Through the flaws and ropery third act, *BioShock* shone through as a blinder of a game. Over 4 million sales later (across all platforms), and Irrational Games and Ken Levine are back with a brand new addition to the *BioShock* marque. But, with no sight of a Big Daddy will punters fall back into the fold?

Set in 1912 the ideological 'paradise' has risen from the depths of the ocean and is now kissing the sky. The story of Rapture is over – Levine was satisfied with leaving it at the end of the original *BioShock* – and we're now in Columbia, a floating city playing as Booker DeWitt, a man looking for a woman called Elizabeth. Claustrophobic settings have been swapped for wide-open fast-flowing areas, Levine's promising bigger groups of baddies in place of intimate battles with a handful of splicers, and you're no longer fighting solo. Elizabeth, the woman in the trailer (on our disc) is a 'combat partner', her intermittent presence enough to expand your plasmid-like powers.



The most normal thing you'll see in this game

Finally, some familiarity: special powers. While it's very unlikely they'll be called plasmids (considering they haven't been invented yet) you'll be able to let loose a volley of electrical bolts and a peckish murder of crows from your skin.

Story rules, and your relationship with Elizabeth governs the direction and reason for being in the game.

It's a list of changes that may strike fear into *BioShock* fans, but think of *Infinite* as another topic in one conversation. Fear, mystery and this amazing locale, all directed by Ken Levine is making us feel very excited. With a release date of 2012, there'll be a lot more to say, too. **Paul Taylor**

THE PITCH

Tyrants and people with electricity for fingers in a city floating on balloons.



THEY SAY

"This game is both true to what people love about the series and unafraid to question every assumption"

WE SAY

The spirit remains, even if the content departs from what people adored about the first two games. We're also hopeful that the ending will be more meaningful than *BioShock*.

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
 LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING



INCOMING

7 This foursome is awesome

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** ACTION | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** SPRING 2011
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY | **DEVELOPER:** INSOMNIAC GAMES | **PLAYERS:** 1-4

RATCHET & CLANK: ALL 4 ONE

Item hogs will be dealt with. Severely

THE PITCH

Ratchet & Clank + four people = this game



If Freud was alive, he would have already written a thesis on Insomniac Games. Let's take a quick recap of some of the subtitles they've attached to their *Ratchet & Clank* series up until this point: *Going Commando*, *Up Your Arsenal*, *Size Matters*, *Tools of Destruction*, *A Crack in Time* – anybody else starting to sniff out a pattern here?

Unfortunately this shining beacon of seriously misplaced innuendo is no more, what with the announcement of *Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One*? Come on guys, you can do better than that. How about *Ratchet & Clank: 4play*? Or *Ratchet & Clank: Quad-bang*? Yeah, okay. That's not as marketable to the tweens.

The 'four' reference is of course a nod to a mechanic whereby Ratchet, Clank, Qwark and Dr. Nefarious form a freakish union for the benefit of a very co-op-centric adventure. *All 4 One* looks like it'll play like a mash-up of all the Ratchet games we've come to know and love, plus *Gauntlet Legends* and *Traveller's Tales' LEGO* series. And while every character may look quite different, they're all put on an even keel with access to a blaster, a grappling gun and a vacuum cleaner.

Man, where were you on that one

marketers? *Ratchet & Clank: The Joy Suck Club*. No?

Anyway, hoovering is definitely the main focus of this sequel and you can vacuum in a number of cool ways. Should an object get in your way – be it a mine or a ubiquitous crate – you can whisk it up and hurl it headlong into foes. If you're short on debris to sling you can woosh up a team mate and pelt them instead. Personally, we want to see this mechanic used in a very unique platforming sense.

Insomniac tells us that the game is easy on the team kills too. So if one of your cohorts is hogging all the loot and is heading for another chest, vacuum them up and send them flying off a cliff, or face-first into a wall. Clearly this game will be a dream for anti-social jerks, but in reality you really will need to work together to get through some of the puzzles.

For example, there are moments when all four players are suspended by a rope from a flying creature across a vast chasm of space. If everybody on the rope doesn't keep the same swing momentum you can smash into things and all die a terrible, terrible (read: hilarious) death. Later on in a deadly furnace environment, your group must move together as a cohesive whole to avoid getting incinerated, smashed or smooshed by the various gears and mechanisms. It all seems like a full 3D *LittleBigPlanet* level to us.

Our group shenanigans culminated in a massive boss fight. Eventually we figured out that if we vacuum-shot Clank up to a high-placed switch it would disable the enemy's

shield. Then, everybody took aim at bright glowing spots on the boss and we blasted until he exploded in a glorious shower of in-game currency. Which is when the in-fighting started and real-life controllers were thrown.

All 4 One is shaping up nicely as a co-op experience. **A Adam Mathew**

THEY SAY

"A laugh-riot with drop-in/drop-out, offline/online gameplay focused on co-operative fun, brought to life with... cinematic visuals."

WE SAY

We co-operate with nobody. Every pickup on the screen: that's ours. Every massive kill machine that kills if you're pushed too close: that's yours.

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING

EXTRA NUTS AND BOLTS

If there is only a single player to play *All 4 One*, the game will automatically assign a CPU controlled player. Each character uses their own unique attacks, such as Clank spinning on the spot to defeat enemies or Nefarious using his claw like hands to slash through enemies.

Interestingly, the game has altered the art style from past PlayStation 3 titles. It has seems to be based off the comic series, with Ratchet's face becoming wider, Qwark's facial features looking different and all the body to head ratios of the characters have been changed.



FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: RPG | DEVELOPER: BOWARE | PUBLISHER: EA
EXPECTED RELEASE: MARCH 2011

DRAGON AGE II

Set in the same universe but a different location, the sequel to *Dragon Age: Origins* is going to do what good sequels should: build on the strong mechanics of the original title whilst bringing a bigger and better game to the series.

Combat feels a bit tidier as skills can be customised on a tree so you can choose your specialisation. Hawke, the protagonist has a voice, and the tone of his/her voice (you can

customise your character, but they're always 'Hawke') changes depending on whether you're a sweetheart or a total prick. And it looks glorious. **Paul Taylor**

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING



FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: FLIGHT SIM | DEVELOPER: FLYING ACES | PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS | EXPECTED RELEASE: TBA 2011

ACE COMBAT: ASSAULT HORIZON

We'll let the developer take over here and leave you with this amusing excerpt from the press release of this series reboot.

"[The team] wanted to... dodge the steel skyscrapers of real world cities at blistering speeds, in an enthralling war drama that spanned the globe.... They wanted players to pick up the controller and become deadly combat pilots in seconds, pulling off breathtaking kills

at impossible speeds, and doing battle online in a multiplayer sky littered with fiery supersonic debris. What they wanted was steel carnage in the sky." Sounds fun. **Paul Taylor**

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING



FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: RACING | DEVELOPER: EDEN STUDIOS | PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS | EXPECTED RELEASE: TBA 2011

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED 2

The first *Test Drive Unlimited* didn't really get the best run on PS2. It was a big concept hamstrung by technology, due to the PS2's hardware and because roughly six people in the world played their games online. Things are obviously going to change for this sequel.

You're now in Ibiza, but after 'unlocking' the airport you get to fly to Oahu – you're basically getting the first game for free here. The level of detail's set to ramp right up as well. Instead of the road being a blocky grey ribbon the edge

of the bitumen is crumbling away. It may sound like an odd thing to point out, but for a game that's all about driving stuff like this counts.

It's a title that accommodates the full gamut of boy racers and high-rolling supercars as you blitz down highways. **Paul Taylor**

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING



FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: SHOOTER | DEVELOPER: GUERRILLA GAMES
PUBLISHER: SCE | EXPECTED RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2011

KILLZONE 3

Picking up where *Killzone 2* left off you're straight back to your Helghast slaughtering ways. The biggest selling point (right after jetpacks) is the Move functionality. Using the main controller to aim and shoot, and the sub controller (or the left side of a Dual Shock) to move and strafe.

We're impressed with the precision of

the main controller but we're a bit worried about the lag between starting the action for reloading (a flick of your wrist) or picking up a weapon (pulling the controller toward you) and it happening on screen.

Paul Taylor

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING



FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: FIGHTING | DEVELOPER: NETHERREALM STUDIOS | PUBLISHER: WARNER BROS | EXPECTED RELEASE: TBA

MORTAL KOMBAT

Everything old is new again in this reboot. Brawlers battle on a 2D plane, weapons are gone in favour of character-specific special attacks, and the focus is back on the violence.

The red stuff flows as thick as the Mekong Delta, spraying onto surfaces while entrails and gore are guaranteed. Classic characters return: Sub-Zero, Johnny Cage, Scorpion, Reptile,

Raiden, Kung Lao, Cyrax, Mileena. It's a list of features for a generation that felt the series lost its way six or so years ago, but also heralds two-versus-two battles to give it a new twist.

We want this to rely on more than just nostalgia and gore, but we're hearing positive whispers. **Paul Taylor**

VERDICT

BAD SHAPE | NEEDS WORK | GOT POTENTIAL
LOOKING GOOD | GREAT STUFF | SURE-THING

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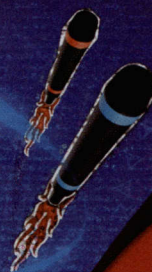
IT'S YOUR MOVE

* Demos subject to change. Packaging artwork is not final and subject to change. Release dates subject to change.
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TORQUE IS CHEAP

How the last word in racing games puts its money where its mouth is – and why it should win the battle for your wallet this Christmas

WORDS: LUKE REILLY

November 4. That's the date our anxious wait will be over. That's the date Gran Turismo 5 will finally be available in stores across Australia and New Zealand.

Even as we type the 140-strong Polyphony Digital team are still hard at work, endlessly honing and refining the game. By the time you read this GT5 will actually be in our hands – and mere weeks away from being in yours.

The details, however, just keep coming – each more surprising than the last.

Revealed at gamescom in Germany was one new track – Autodromo Nazionale Monza – and a horde of new vehicles. Monza, one of the most historic racing circuits in the world, is a brand new track for the GT series and, according to Kazunori Yamauchi, is an compelling track for both beginners and veterans alike with fast corners and narrow sections.



BMW M3 Coupé



THE B TEAM

Back in 2001, when *GT3: A-Spec* was released, Yamauchi had intended to almost immediately release *GT3: B-Spec* – a race driver management simulator akin to the likes of *Football Manager*. At the time it proved impossible but after 10 years Polyphony Digital has reached the point where B-Spec is on level terms with A-Spec).

The concept of B-Spec having an entire game of its own has been sidelined, but in *GT5*'s Home menu both A- and B-Spec are centrally positioned with equal sized icons. Your B-Spec lackey this time round is not one driver but rather a whole team of them. You'll eventually be able to run a crew of six B-Spec drivers, each with their own driving personality. You'll need four drivers, for instance, to run a 24-hour race.

Yamauchi confirmed the inclusion of the new Pagani Zonda R, which recently wrenched the Nürburgring 'track car' record from the Ferrari 599XX (6 minutes 58 seconds) and lowered it to 6 minutes 47 seconds. The Pagani Zonda R, which weighs in at a scant 1070kg, is powered by a 560kW, AMG 6.0-litre V12. Pagani is only making 15 of them so unless you strike oil in your backyard don't count on ever owning one of these outside of *GT5*.

Also revealed was a cluster of old classics. The first, the '67 Ferrari 330 P4 (which locked out the podium in the 1967 24 Hours of Daytona), is one of Yamauchi's personal all-time favourite cars. Second was the '67 Ford GT40 Mk IV that, at the end of that same season, finally beat the P4 at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Third was the '67 Jaguar XJ13, which was developed as a Ferrari-beater. Unfortunately it

never raced and only one was ever produced. Also modelled on the only existing surviving car is the fourth of these racing relics, the '67 Lamborghini Miura Bertone Prototype P400.

Yamauchi moved into an explanation of *GT5*'s tweaked B-Spec mode (see 'The B Team') before delving into the meat of the game: GT Mode.

GT Mode retains all the key features that makes *GT* tick – licences, dealerships with new and used cars, plus the tuning shop. There'll be five different levels of series (beginner, intermediate, advanced, professional and extreme) and five different types of vehicles (kart, production, rally, race and formula).

That's right: karts. Yamauchi is so chuffed with just how much the handling model for *GT5* has improved he felt he could

introduce a karting mode – despite the very unique nature of kart handling.

"This is something we were actually saving for *Gran Turismo 6*," said Yamauchi. "But the information leaked out so we decided we would just put it in this one."

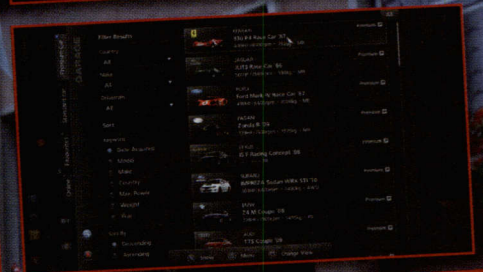
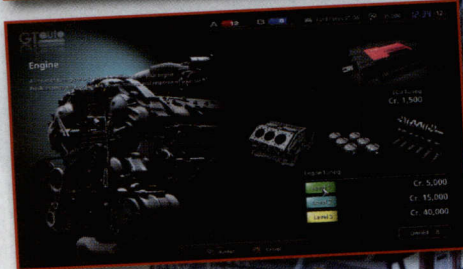
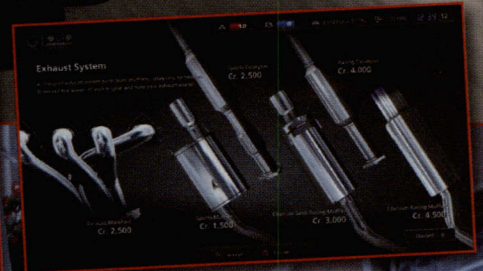
The information about the inclusion of karting was "leaked" by SCE President of Worldwide Studios Shuhei Yoshida back in mid-June, although it wasn't confirmed until now.

The leak also made mention of the debut of some kind of track editor in the series.

“GT Mode retains all the key features that makes *GT* tick”

PIMPING IS EASY

Check out these screens featuring the customisation options in *GT5*. You want excessive amounts of brain-stalling detail? You got it.



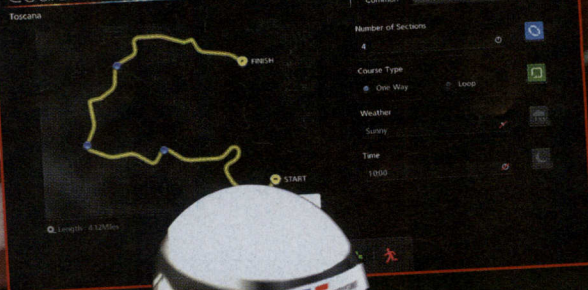
JUST COURSE

If you're looking for a tool to lay your own asphalt inch by inch – honing every degree of camber and every change in elevation – this *isn't* it. Yamauchi was careful to avoid calling it a course editor because to him that implies a barrier of entry akin to a 3D modelling program. Instead, the course maker in its current shape allows players to select a variety of parameters from dropdown menus and let the game randomly generate a track in line with those settings over four sectors. You start with a theme, ranging from Toscana sunset to springtime Germany, select the time of day, weather, and whether you want a point-to-point track or a circuit. Next you

select the quantity of corners and their sharpness, define the width of the track and any banks. At this stage you just hit the "generate track" button and the game spits out a course that suits your specs. You can hit the button again and again until you get something you like. After all this you can share your track with friends and race it against others online.

It's a little disappointing a fully-fledged editing system wasn't offered in conjunction with this simple track generator because, regardless of how complicated something is, there's always somebody somewhere good enough to exploit it (and share it online with everyone who can't). The pangs of sadness that we won't be rebuilding Oran Park in *GT5* stab furiously at our aching hearts.

Course Maker



This also proved to be correct.

Yamauchi revealed one of the most exciting additions to the GT universe: the course maker. Yamauchi pointed out that it's not, in fact, a "track editor" simply because you're not able to edit existing tracks. Rather you simply create brand new ones from scratch using an accessible custom circuit system (see 'Just Course').

Lastly Yamauchi presented *GT5*'s Photo Mode, which supports 3D. This should be quite familiar for anyone who utilised it in *GT4*, although the amount of options and variables it now comes boggles the mind. If you're into car porn you may want to stock up on tissues.

On the topic of cars again – contrary to some reports, standard cars do not have cabin view. Despite the lengthy development lifecycle it's proven impossible to even implement a rudimentary cockpit camera (along the lines of *GT* for PSP) in the time they had left. The 200 or so premium models have fully modelled interiors and a dedicated

cabin view for racing. The remaining 800 odd standard cars have no such view.

You may need to delete some clutter and old installs from your PS3's HDD too. Yamauchi has stated if you have at least 256MB it will run but for the best possible experience and reduced loading times you'll need around 10GB. By comparison *GT5 Prologue* needs about 6GB. It shouldn't be an issue for more recent PS3 adopters but owners of launch consoles with smaller HDDs may need to evict some content from their machines.

First review next issue? You better believe it. **B**



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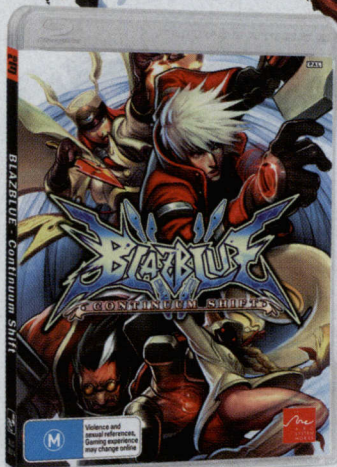


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“WWII is now a distant memory”

MEDAL OF HONOR

60 MEDAL OF HONOR

The gritty reboot that'll Tier you a new 1

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- 80** Flight Control HD

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING THIS MONTH



- 40%** Flight Control HD
- 40%** Clashing beards with terrorists
- 15%** Trying to win the Monaco GP
- 5%** Football. Both types

REVIEW RATINGS

PlayStation
GOLD AWARD

10 Incredible: Perfection is relative and elusive, and no game will ever be perfect. Our 10 doesn't mean a game is flawless, it means a game has done everything it set out to do in an incredible fashion and thus it deserves our highest possible kudos.

PlayStation
SILVER AWARD

9 Excellent: An outstanding game, either limited by its scope, sequel status (and lack of improvement) or a few too many minor blemishes from being a 10. Likely one of the best in its genre, a 9 comes with high praise.

PlayStation
BRONZE AWARD

8 Great: Still well ahead of the pack in most departments, despite a few issues here and there. Thoroughly recommended.

7 Good: A robust package that does a solid job despite a handful of mild to moderate problems. Enjoyable in parts, just not fantastic overall.

6 Decent: This game will have some noticeable flaws that may make it hard to recommend to those who aren't fans of the genre, but it will do more right than it does wrong. Just.

5 Mediocre: A conceded pass, if you know what we mean. Half okay, but half-busted. Might scrape by for fans, but with the quality games we do have, there's no need to drop real money on a game that half sucks.

4 Poor: Anything below 5, strictly speaking, is a fail – but there are degrees of 'bad' just as there are degrees of 'good'. A 4 is unrefined, partially broken and poorly designed.

3 Very disappointing: Things start to go very wrong here – fundamentally flawed in many ways, boring and close to pointless.

2 Terrible: Nothing good here, and definitely not worth removing the wrapper.

1 The worst: Reserved for the very worst gaming could ever offer. A broken, offensive mess without a single redeeming quality. If a 10 is better than virtually every game available, a 1 is worse than virtually every game available. *OPS* has handed out this score only once: hello *Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust!*



We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Sony Bravia for the best picture possible.



INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** SHOOTER | **RELEASE:** NOW | **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA
DEVELOPER: DANGER CLOSE/DICE | **PLAYERS:** 1-24 | **RRP:** \$99.95

MEDAL OF HONOR

Full battle rattle

Medal of Honor doesn't waste any time making its intentions clear. WWII is a distant memory but the world is still at war. The stylised intro, zooming from satellite level all the way down into the cabin of a beat-up ute deep within Afghanistan, sets the tone right from the start. It's O-dark-30 and you're well behind enemy lines. Local music is drifting from the ancient stereo as you bump your way into a run-down town. Your four-man crew of heavily armed and even more heavily bearded Special Forces operators are in no way dicking around. *Medal of Honor* wants to make you feel like the tip of the spear in today's battlefield and it succeeds from the very beginning.

The three best elements of *Medal of Honor* are the atmosphere, the sound design and the variety of missions.



Medal of Honor is very much a soldier's story. It indulges itself with a little Hollywood-style chain-of-command drama but, for the most part, it's very much about the men on the ground. The characters aren't especially fleshed-out much but they are, above all, believable. The mood is bolstered by a huge amount of well-delivered and authentic sounding dialogue.

Speech is clipped and efficient. Your teammates call out targets and orders without fuss. There's no whooping or hollering; it's strictly professional. It doesn't sound like it's being read from a script and it's communicated with relevant military jargon. For instance, the first group of Tier 1 operators are SEALs so they refer to building floors as decks, as per Navy nomenclature. It's a detail that could've been missed without the proper research and advice, but it wasn't.

There's organic humour in deadly situations without the writers resorting to punch lines. Heading down into an unlit corridor a squad mate rallies you to his position: "Come on," he says. "I've got a dark stairwell full of can't-see-shit down here."

Later in the game, while climbing a mountain with your partner Dusty (the bearded, FDNY cap wearing cover character of *Medal of Honor*), your team leader asks about his next move. His brutal and businesslike answer could've been as easily applied to what he felt like for lunch, and it's all the more blackly comic because of it.

Best of all, nobody says, "Stay frosty."

The tenor of the game is spot on and it's only made better by the incredibly rich tapestry of sound effects and the shifting musical score.

Like the *Bad Company* series, the sounds of ballistics are something *Medal of Honor* gets very right. The report from your weapon changes depending on the surroundings. Out in the open the sound travels further. Indoors, or within walled areas, the sound of firing is deafening.

In regard to bullets, just like Ewan McGregor's character learns in the film *Black Hawk Down*, a hiss means it's close and a snap means they're shooting at you. Whenever there's a snap your screen will be tinged in red towards the direction of the shooter, your heart will start beating out of your chest and your breathing rate will skyrocket. You'll hear all of this.

The music score, a mix of stirring war film type stuff infused with Middle Eastern motifs and some modern rock, also matches the game perfectly.

You'll play as four characters across the course of *Medal of Honor*; two separate Tier 1 operators, a US Army Ranger and the front-seater in an Apache attack helicopter. The missions include sneaking about in darkness using suppressed weapons and your knife, full-scale assaults alongside the Afghan National Army or with a battalion of US Army Rangers, long-range sniping battles and an on-rails aerial mission. The action, which occurs

WORSE THAN

MODERN WARFARE 2



BETTER THAN

BAD COMPANY 2

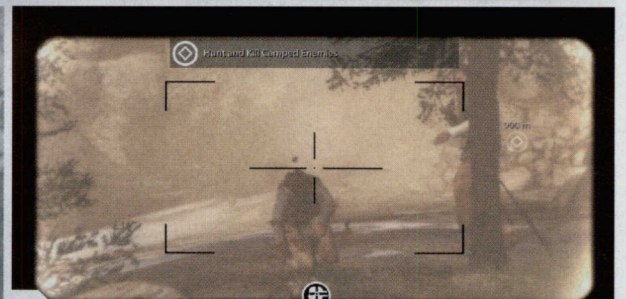


“It's O-dark-30 and you're well behind enemy lines”

"We are in no way dicking around"



Peek-a-boo



Long range sniping. Right in the grape



There's a reason they call them Hellfire missiles



Patterson, huh? This must be Jimmy's grandkid or something

METTLE FOR A MEDAL

The first living recipient of the US Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War is to be decorated for having performed a dangerous and heroic act – saving a wounded comrade during a vicious firefight in Afghanistan.

In October 2007 Army Staff Sergeant Salvatore Giunta's squad was ambushed by Afghan insurgents near the Pakistan border. Several of his squad mates were wounded, including his best friend Josh Brennan. While Brennan was being dragged away by two enemy soldiers Giunta braved intense fire to go and rescue him. Although Brennan later died from his wounds Giunta managed to save him from falling into enemy hands.

Several Medals of Honor have been awarded for selfless acts of bravery during the current conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan but they've previously all been posthumous commendations.



7 "Wait, wait, I was promised doughnuts. Are you telling me there are, in fact, *no* doughnuts?"



This is what destroying mortar positions from miles away with an Apache looks like

over one roughly 48-hour period, changes faster than you can become distracted. The enemies you'll find yourself up against change even faster – Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Chechen rebels, they're all there in Afghanistan and none of them are happy to meet you.

We had no problems with the controls and aside from the occasional stutter everything runs smoothly. It's a conventional, fairly scripted first-person shooter, like *Modern Warfare 2*.

Beyond the campaign there are two other modes of play. The most crucial of these is online multiplayer, which is something we can detail here but cannot thoroughly critique until the game is available to the public.

The multiplayer portion of *Medal of Honor* isn't a small, supplementary afterthought. Like most AAA shooters these days it's designed

to be viewed as at least half of the total offering. It's the Cash to the single-player's Tango. The cheese on its Vegemite, if you will.

Medal of Honor's multiplayer was developed by Battlefield studio DICE and built upon the Frostbite engine that powers the *Bad Company* series. If you're expecting it to be like *Bad Company 2*, however, you'll be disappointed. The classes, in particular, are quite different and it's far more focused on straightforward shooting than it is with constant cooperation. Of course, *Medal of Honor* isn't trying to win fans from *Bad Company*; it's trying to win them from *Modern Warfare*.

Our impressions of the beta were mixed but, like *Modern Warfare*, *Medal of Honor* is certainly fast-paced. It's as much about dying and respawning as it is about killing, and it's full of the same kinds of weapons. The control scheme is similar and so is the spirit. Thanks to a policy of simplification *Medal of Honor* does feel more balanced than the likes of *Modern Warfare 2*, rewarding skill over the right combination of combat perks.

Eight maps seems a little light but they are suitably varied, including a rocky valley, a wreck-filled airfield, a snow-covered mountain and a ruined section of Kabul itself. We imagine more may follow should a loyal audience embrace it.

The limited classes do tend to keep things in order. There are three in *Medal of Honor*: riflemen, special ops and snipers. Each faction, both the coalition forces and the local opposition, have the same classes and each class specialises in suitable weaponry. Each class levels up separately but they do so independent of the factions.

The warm gravy drizzling down the back of this freshly-roasted multiplayer meal is a series of unlocks which, perhaps unsurprisingly, consists of ribbons and medals for your service record and a locker full of new firearms and accessories. The proven carrot-on-a-stick concept will always keep people coming back for more.

Medal of Honor multiplayer also features a series of scorechain awards earned by stringing



Adam picks up a well-deserved cameo

together killstreaks and completing other in-game actions. Get your scorechain to 600, for instance, and you'll pick up the chance to bring an abrupt end to somebody's breakfast by dropping a cruise missile in their cornflakes.

There are four play modes available, all team-based. Team Assault is the most direct of these; it's a straightforward deathmatch. The others are slightly more involved.

Objective Raid sees insurgents tasked with sabotaging two objectives using IEDs – improvised explosive devices. The coalition forces must stop them. The reverse of this is Combat Mission, which sees coalition forces instructed to clear five objectives under heavy opposition. Sector Control, the last of the modes, is a capture-the-flag style mode where the two factions must battle for control of three objectives.

The other mode of play is Tier 1 mode. This is a competitive single-player mode where you must replay the single-player missions but aim to get the best time and the most skill kills. Difficulty is increased and there are no mid-level checkpoints. Scores and stats will be tracked to online leaderboards and markers inside the levels themselves will display your

“The quality of this contemporary reboot might surprise you”

friends' progress. Tier 1 mode features no co-op support and is online only, which is a shame.

As impressed as we are with *Medal of Honor* we do have a few problems.

The visuals, for one, can be a little up and down. Uniform textures, for instance, can take some time to pop back in after a cut-scene. This only serves to highlight the jarring difference between the gorgeous pre-rendered cut-scenes and the actual in-game graphics even more. *World at War* did gore effects better and the explosions are noticeably below average. Overall it's just lacking that final layer of detail that separates a good-looking game from a great looking one. It's fine from afar, but some of the game's textures don't stand up to zoomed-in scrutiny.

It's hard to fault the sound but the exhaust note for the in-game ATV doesn't feel like its properly synched up with the speed of the bike itself. Release the trigger slowly and your speed will drop but your revs will remain high. It's a weird blight on the near-perfect audio.

Medal of Honor's biggest flaw, however, is value. The single-player campaign is excellent but, continuing the trend of late, it is short. Very short. Playing it on the hardest difficulty setting will reverse this somewhat and is ultimately more satisfying. Hard difficulty injects a lot more realism and forces you to play the game more like we imagine it ought to be played: patiently and precisely.

Either way, at five or so hours – on lower difficulty, depending on your play-style – *Medal of Honor* still only weighs in at a similar length to *Modern Warfare 2* (which was criticised for its brevity).

It's not the length of the campaign that the flaw though; it's the overall end package.

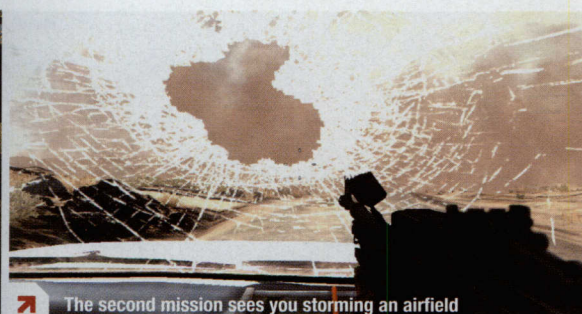
If you're not planning on playing online you'll be paying for half a game you'll never use. You might say the same could be said about *Modern Warfare 2* but you'd be neglecting the fact that *Modern Warfare 2* came with four-player splitscreen deathmatches and a very flexible standalone, offline/online challenge mode in the form of the Special Ops mode (which supported up to two players, either splitscreen or online).

In *Modern Warfare 2* there was content beyond the single-player campaign for those who weren't inclined to dabble online. In *Medal of Honor* there is not.

It's telling, though, that our biggest problem with the new *Medal of Honor* is something it doesn't have rather than some critical and fundamental gameplay flaw. EALA, or Danger Close as it's now called, has not just arrested the decline of this once-great brand. Along with DICE it has turned this franchise's fortunes around in a single combined effort.

The *Medal of Honor* series has been a bit of a shambles ever since *Medal of Honor: Frontline*. The quality of this contemporary reboot, then, might surprise you. The presentation is terrific. It's a far more realistic and compelling single-player campaign than either *Modern Warfare 2* or *Bad Company 2*; we were hugely engrossed and thoroughly recommend it. Merging the brazen action of the *Modern Warfare* and *Bad Company* series with the authenticity and character credibility of films like *Black Hawk Down* and *The Hurt Locker* has resulted in a fantastic and exciting shooter.

Our concerns about its lifespan remain but *Medal of Honor* is one of 2010's must-play games. **— Luke Reilly**



The second mission sees you storming an airfield



Your ride is a run down pick-up truck



Say cheese!



Wrong time to reload

PIECES OF THE PAST

There's a very good reason to get *Medal of Honor* on PS3. The PS3 version comes with a remastered version of the PS2 blockbuster *Medal of Honor: Frontline*. We noticed a few glitches have popped up in the process but it's great inclusion and, despite its age, well worth playing. You'll likely be amazed at how much more patient we must have been in 2002 when you realise mid-mission checkpoints were very, very few and far between back then.

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

More Tony Scott than Michael Bay: excellent. The graphics themselves could be better though.

SOUND

Top of the class. The effects are second to none and the dialogue is perfect.

CONTROLS

Standard and smooth. No fuss.

REPLAY VALUE

EA ought to have bolstered the short campaign with more offline modes or splitscreen.

VERDICT

A top-notch shooter with an authentic real-world setting and grittily realistic atmosphere.

8

PlayStation
Official Magazine - Australia
**SILVER
AWARD**

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** RACING | **RELEASE:** NOW | **DISTRIBUTOR:** NAMCO BANDAI
PARTNERS: | **DEVELOPER:** CODEMASTERS | **PLAYERS:** 1-12 | **RRP:** \$109.95

F1 2010

"He can't decide whether to leave his visor half open or half closed!"



F1 2010 makes our hands hurt. If they made DualShocks out of coal we could've turned ours into diamonds by now. *F1 2010* makes you hold your controller tighter than any racing game we've ever played.

F1 2010 isn't one of those racing games that allows you to scratch your nose on straights. We don't imagine that you'd be able to relax behind the wheel of an F1 car. *F1 2010* captures this brilliantly.

The best way to describe *F1 2010* is as an assault. It assaults your vision with corners that

appear and that are gobbled up beneath your car faster than you can blink. It assaults your ears with the authentic banshee-like shrieking of F1 racing.

It assaults your reflexes with split-second race-breaking moments. You don't have time to think; just act. Rounding a bend at Monaco we saw Hülkenberg facing the wrong direction on the racing line. A millisecond later we collided at over 200km/h. On another occasion, at Catalunya, two drivers came together a few car lengths ahead of us. One of them was spinning and one of them was vertical when we threaded ourselves through the dangerous gap between them. For reference, it was Hülkenberg again.

Cockpit view is the only way to play this game. No other view communicates the sheer velocity of these cars and the ferocity of the racing. This is white-knuckle racing better than it's ever been done before.

Career mode is where *F1 2010* shines. You can choose a career of either three, five or seven seasons (after which you'll be forced to retire). You'll start at one of the smaller teams, like Virgin, Lotus or HRT. We chose Virgin.

The minnow teams have very different objectives to the established powerhouses. Just like real life, Virgin does not expect you to win races. It's just as well because, unless you wind the difficulty right down, you won't be able to. Like in real life these small team cars just aren't as competitive. In our first race they were happy if we finished above 18th. We picked up a shocking points finish at

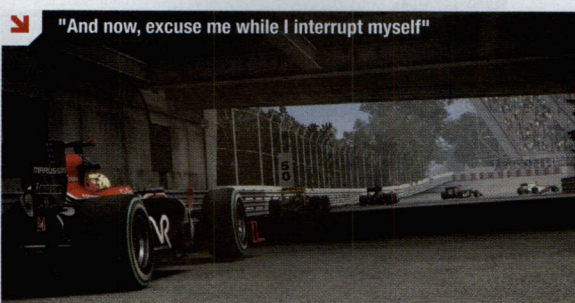
7 "You might not think that's cricket, and it's not, it's motor racing"

"I should imagine that the conditions in the cockpit are totally unimaginable!"





"Either the car is stationary, or it's on the move"



"And now, excuse me while I interrupt myself"



"It assaults your reflexes with split-second race-breaking moments"

Melbourne and our crew chief sounded like he was having an orgasm.

The larger teams expect far more of you but that's a given. They want poles, wins and constructor titles. Anything less is unacceptable.

F1 2010 is all about details. Our crew chief, for instance, was quick to point out that it'd be great to get a good result at Melbourne because it's an important race – on account of us setting our nationality to Australian and making Melbourne our home Grand Prix. The crowd get louder for the chequered flag. Reporters will stop you for impromptu interviews at your trailer and there are post-race press conferences if you make the podium. The pit stops look fantastic. Codemasters has not missed much.

However it's the weather system that's most remarkable. Codies has claimed it's the most complex weather system ever seen in a racing game – and we can't disagree. Unpredictable weather can play a significant role in *F1* and *F1 2010* completely embraces it.

As it starts to rain the track will slowly begin to lose grip, with some areas doing so faster than others. Sheltered parts of a track will remain fine but dips and other imperfections in the tarmac will begin to collect standing water. You'll be told the odds of rain occurring in any particular session while in the garage before you hit the track and you'll need to plan accordingly.

Just like real life success will come from a combination of strategy and luck. Sitting in the Virgin garage at Shanghai at the beginning

of qualifying we were told there was a 99 per cent chance of rain. But it wasn't raining at that moment. We hit the track on our option tyres on a high-speed, dry set-up. We got one lap in before it started to rain. It rained for the rest of the session and our time wasn't beaten.

When the rain stops, a dry line will appear as the field circulates. The dry line will provide more grip and will be the fastest way around the track. Stray from the line onto the moist tarmac surrounding it, however, and you'll be in trouble.

Faults are very few. *F1 2010* caters magnificently for sim-junkies and driving aids are present for the casual set, although it starts tough and it only gets tougher. We love that, but not everyone will. The damage seems a little underwhelming compared to *Race Driver: GRID* but this may be a licensing issue.

Real-life is a little more colourful than *F1 2010* too. Fiddling with your TV's display settings helps but we'd say *F1 2010* is just marginally too washed out.

Codemasters didn't add a safety car to *F1 2010* for gameplay reasons because it'd be deadly boring to be stuck in a queue for six or seven minutes. That's true, but when the field spread out we did find ourselves wishing for one every few races or so. In real *F1* a safety car bunches the field up, so it'd be a great way for players in *F1 2010* to close the gap on leading cars. The AI could take over, like it does during pit stops. You could even simulate to the end of the safety car period to keep things moving. This, however, is a very minor gripe.

WORSE THAN

MARK WEBBER



BETTER THAN

SEBASTIAN VETTEL



F1 2010 is Codemasters doing what it does best. Unadulterated, realistic racing. It doesn't lose its way with a trailer full of empty energy drink cans and promo girl panties; it focuses on the job at hand. That job is to make you *feel* like an *F1* driver and, in this department, *F1 2010* far exceeds our expectations.

Brilliant. **Luke Reilly**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Spot on and featuring a stack of detail. We'd have liked it to be more vibrant through.

SOUND

Can't fault it. The sounds of racing, the buzz of the garage, it's fantastic.

CONTROLS

Adjustable difficulty levels and driver aids make it easy or impossible. Get a G27 wheel and it's nigh on perfect.

REPLAY VALUE

Seven seasons of racing? *F1 2010* will keep you going for absolutely ages. We're hopelessly addicted to the challenge.

VERDICT

The best pure racing game we've played in many, many years. Acquire immediately.

9



TEAM PLAYER

The rivalry between team mates has rarely been more obvious than it has in the 2010 *F1* season. This rivalry is a key factor in *F1 2010*'s career mode. Your results in the championship are key but it's your teammate who is the true barometer of success. If you want to be the team's number one driver (and get first dibs on R&D upgrades and the back seat on the team bus) you need to out-perform them during qualifying and out-perform them on race day. Success is tracked in a head-to-head screen, accessed by looking towards your teammate's position in the garage before hitting the track.



Surely the legs would be an easier target

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** SPORTS | **RELEASE:** NOW | **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY
DEVELOPER: ZINDAGI GAMES | **PLAYERS:** 1-4 | **RRP:** \$59.95

SPORTS CHAMPIONS

Let the minigames begin

SET UP

You're constantly reminded to be about 2.5m away from the screen and to have plenty of room around you. It's possible to play this on the couch, but beach volleyball and table tennis pretty much demand that you stand up and get involved. We recommend that your TV's set no lower than chest height or be big enough to not have to worry about this.

You'd be wise to buy stocks in Zindagi Games as we bet that everyone that buys a PlayStation Move will buy a copy of *Sports Champions*. Six sports, full motion controls – it's a perfect fit for new tech, and early adopters will feel confident that their new tech is worth their hard earned. It looks pretty and very accessible, but if you're still unsure then you have to spend a little bit of time with the choices within.

The sports are an eclectic mix: disc golf, beach volleyball, gladiator duel, bocce, archery and table tennis. Out of these you're going to spend a lot of time with table tennis and disc golf, and probably scratch your head over bocce. The latter's a bit like lawn bowls, but instead of bowling your balls down the green you have to lob them as close as

you can towards the pallino (the 'jack', if you like). Smartly there's a bunch of play areas of different shapes, sizes, and pitch types.

Table tennis shows off the technical capabilities of Move the best, as well as being the most entertaining. Presentation wise it's as slick as any high-end sports title (true for the whole package, really) and the shape of the Move controller feels the most like the object it's representing.

It's instantly tempting to smash the ball and you can by madly swinging your arm, but pros also step toward the screen. Long shots that drive toward your baseline mean you have to step back a touch to accommodate the ball, and it feels very natural – once you feel confident it's totally possible to pull off some impressive technical shots. A constant but not

WORSE THAN

BEING ROBIN HOOD



BETTER THAN

VANCOUVER 2010



We're yet to split an arrow in twain

overbearing tutorial cuts in once in a while to teach you these finer moves so you're never left wondering how to add enough spin.

The only gripe we have is that switching from backhand to forehand sometimes registers as a hit, and while it feels finely tuned 99 per cent of the time there are a few odd moments. Again, this is across all the sports.

Beach Volleyball's the worst offender, as jumping to block a spike feels pretty vague, and along with archery and gladiator duel it benefits from having two main controllers rather than just one, and you need to be fairly forceful when jabbing toward the screen. All of the sports are totally playable with just one controller but you'll sometimes feel like you're missing out. Archery has a lot of variety, but pulling your bow by just using the trigger doesn't have the same appeal as using one controller as the limbs and the other as the string.

We're impressed with this, and you should be too. *Sports Champions* is a strong first showing, and a great example of the strength of motion controls. **A Paul Taylor**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Well-polished and easy to get into. Beginners and gaming veterans alike will feel comfortable here.

SOUND

We like the inspirational music when you're on a match point or other tense moment in a game, and the sound effects work well.

CONTROLS

You'll be happier with two main controllers, but this is a near-flawless example of Move's potential.

REPLAY VALUE

Come for archery, stay for table tennis. Great learning curve and challenge modes to keep you going.

VERDICT

Despite a few quirks this is a must-have launch title. It's strong enough to fall back on too.

8



something something big red balls

0 / 4

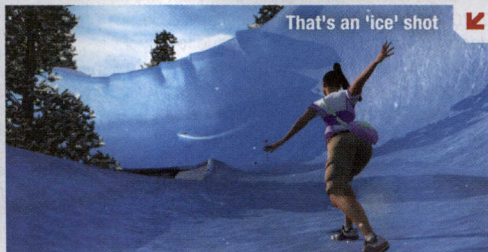
Try to throw bocce balls as close to the pallino as you can. (Those 4 balls)



On target, yet again



Missing the ball? That's a paddlin'



That's an 'ice' shot

START THE PARTY!

It's your party. Cry if you want to

INFO

FORMAT: PS3
GENRE: PARTY
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: SUPERMASSIVE GAMES
PLAYERS: 1
RRP: \$59.95

Much like *EyeToy: Play*, *Start The Party!* is a collection of mini-games, but now the concept benefits from both the PlayStation Move and augmented reality via the PlayStation Eye. The latter is admittedly pretty cool as it can 'transform' your Move controller into everything from a flashlight to an electric shaver and you can also draw over your opponent's avatar. This means that doodle abuse is in your future. You can take that literally if you'd like.

There are roughly 20 mini-games on offer here and they're divided up into the following

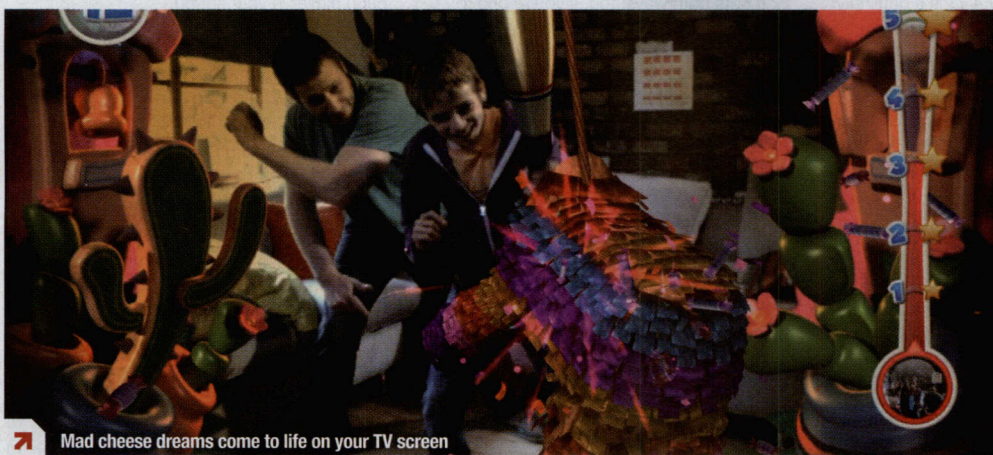
modes; Solo (self explanatory), Survival (do challenges until your flail turns to fail), Group Play (four person pass-the-Move multiplayer), Party (a standardised list of mini-games divided into *Buzz!*-like rounds) and Party Mix (the same again, but randomised). Frankly, we expected more content on the disc, even when you take the mid-range price of admission into account.

Unfortunately, the mini-games are a lopsided collection. A handful of them, like swatting flies and painting basic onscreen shapes, have all the staying power of a game

of ball-in-a-cup and you'll quickly tire of them. Whereas others, like the 'haircuts made to order' and the chance to use Move as a rescue helicopter, are impressively done and well worth a repeat performance.

Start the Party! is great for younger kids, but the young at heart will find the fun is spread pretty thinly. The game also doesn't completely live up to its title as a 'party starter', or its exclamation point for that matter. This is mainly because the 'multiplayer' is a missed opportunity thanks to it relying upon a pass-and-play style rather than head-to-head.

Still, this menagerie of Move mini-games gives us some hope for future motion-based titles. Fun, but limited. **A Adam Mathew**



Mad cheese dreams come to life on your TV screen

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Bright, friendly but Forrest Gump simple.

SOUND

The cheesy voiceover guy is Hell's narrator.

CONTROLS

Move can pull off splendid 1:1 movements.

REPLAY VALUE

High scores are back! Perfect for a grudge match.

VERDICT

Great to keep the rugrats amused for a while, otherwise we recommend a rental.

6

KUNG FU RIDER

A Moving violation

INFO

FORMAT: PS3
GENRE: RACING
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: JAPAN STUDIO
PLAYERS: 1-2
RRP: \$59.95

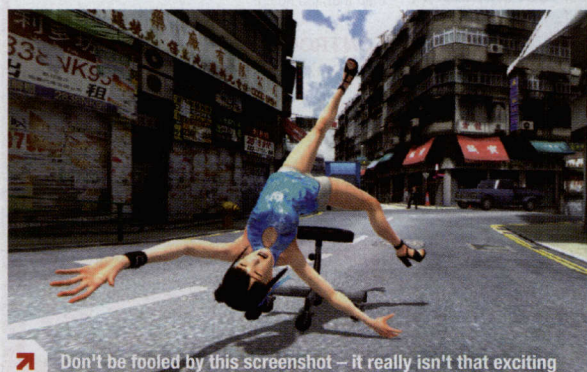
There's a difference between a game that is wacky and one that is wack. *Kung Fu Rider* desperately tries to be the former but winds up being the latter.

The general idea is to have your character descend through the streets of Hong Kong on an office chair and to evade Mafioso goons by waggling the PlayStation Move in very unintuitive ways. Yes sir, this experience plummets downhill from the very start.

Control-wise, you have to accelerate by flicking the Move controller downward to pump the vehicle forward, which works okay. The streets are lousy with objects and goons however, so you'll need to bust out dashes, dodges, kicks and jumps to reach the goal



This is the face you'll make if you accidentally pick up this turkey



Don't be fooled by this screenshot – it really isn't that exciting

before time runs out. But while the basics of control (turning and accelerating) work fine, flicking up to jump and lunging forward to super dash are two motions that are regularly confused by the game.

Play *Kung Fu Rider* for five minutes and you've seen everything this paper thin game has to offer. You're looking at only six levels, with three variations thereof and a multiplayer mode that should have been a head-to-head racing challenge, but wound up being a boring co-op mode (one player rides, the other moves objects out of the way – woo). Like a few other Move games, the PlayStation Eye camera will take snaps of you while you're playing the game. Almost none of these will show you having fun.

This is exactly the type of game the Move didn't need. Move is advanced and accurate; waggle-based gesture controls are a waste of its time. Do not play. **A Adam Mathew**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Quirky characters with some English charm.

SOUND

It has funky music, we'll give it that much.

CONTROLS

Horrendous, even after tweaking the options.

REPLAY VALUE

Slim to none. This is DLC in disguise as a full game.

VERDICT

Easily the worst example of PlayStation Move created thus far. Avoid like venereal disease.

3

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: SPORT | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA | PLAYERS: 1-7 (2-22 ONLINE) | RRP: \$109.95

FIFA 11

Made from pieces of real awesome



MASTER OF THE POSTS

This year you can play as a goalkeeper! Does that sound absolutely, positively... boring? To be fair, despite the fact there's a Goalie Be a Pro mode, we feel the option will be used almost exclusively for 11-on-11 online play. However the controls to send your net guardian leaping sideways are fairly impressive. There are on screen indicators that give you a heads-up as to where the ball is headed, and you need only tap the right stick to dive in the requisite direction. Fun for short bursts.

The FIFA series has developed a knack for producing games that seem perfect out of the gate. *FIFA 11* is no different.

It's tough to criticise. While the hundreds of matches ahead may bring this titan back to Earth with another wish list of changes for *FIFA 12*, at the moment *FIFA 11* is a bafflingly brilliant update.

Rather than a handful of scattered improvements, *FIFA 11*'s changes are all about making the on-field play better and more realistic. Forget kid brothers and cheap online adversaries spamming you with game breaking bollocks. They've leered out every conceivable bit of dodge from last year.

Oh, let us count thy ways. Recall how goalkeepers had reflexes like citizens from the planet Krypton, saving almost everything belted at them? Gone. One-on-ones with the keeper are now more likely to end as they should – with a goal. Remember how easy it was to steal a ball off an opponent as they chested it down? That's been fixed, with players able to receive and touch the ball into space with their thighs.

And the AI. Wow. The biggest gripe we had with *FIFA 10* was the AI of your team. Dumber than hammers, they drifted out of position which allowed strikes

on goal, failed to secure easy intercepts, and made poor attempts to mark opposing players. Now they'll take steps to intercept balls, make more intelligent runs, and stay closer to marked players. It's like they actually want to win.

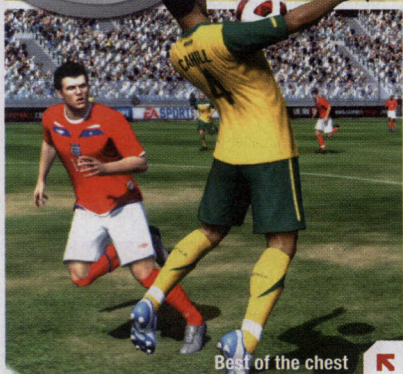
It cuts both ways, too. If you're one to play the computer you'll notice there's a heightened sense of desperation from the other team. Midfielders now chase down ball carriers and sniff out intercepts with the same desperation as a fat kid raiding a refrigerator, while defenders are substantially more proficient at blocking pass canals.

The big new weapon available to players on all sides is vastly improved physicality. Its effect is monstrous. Expanding on last year's improvements, momentum and weight play huge parts in both ground and air challenges. It's a barbarian ball this year, truly wild, and unlike in *Pro Evolution* players can truly shoulder barge, slide tackle, and leap their way to possession with relative ease. It means less ball security and leads to greater concentration and tension in-game.

Off the pitch *FIFA 11* feels more simplified. A revised Career mode allows players to stride through several seasons as a Player, a Manager, or a Player-Manager. There are



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AWARD**



Best of the chest



The elaborate game of 'trip the keeper' utterly backfired

WORSE THAN

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BETTER THAN

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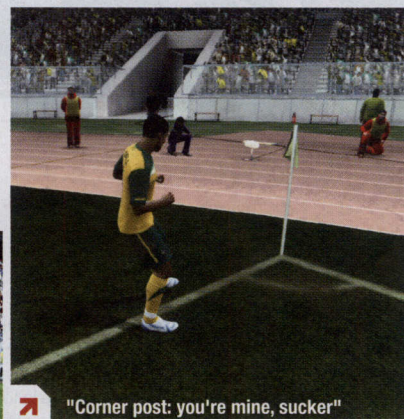


nice updates to the Manager mode, too, including suggested managerial strategies for each player in your squad.

All the other modes you love from previous years, including Be A Pro, Lounge, Live Season, and more are here too, as well as the new *FIFA 11* World Cup tournament. This is all about customising a team of 11 using the new Creation Centre to form a footballing clan and take on the world.

Yes, we have a deeply romantic view of *FIFA 11*. After our initial concerns it would be too sim-like, EA have rounded the edges and made a representation of the world game that rings true. Every soccer fan will be playing this for the next 12 months. Acquire on sight.

James Ellis



"Corner post: you're mine, sucker"

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

The dynamic light and colours on the pitch are sensational, though character faces can look doughy.

SOUND

Some recycled commentary from last year, but other than that, top notch.

CONTROLS

Overall we'd equate the experience to skiing down a velvet areola. Buttery.

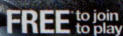
REPLAY VALUE

Like *Call of Duty* or *Battlefield*, this is a lifestyle game. Play it on your own. Play it casually. Play it online. There are hundreds of hours of game here.

VERDICT

If you've skipped the last few *FIFA* updates, boost the score by one. Essential.

9

[illegible]

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PlayStation Portable

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WORSE THAN

FIFA 11



BETTER THAN

PRO EVO ON PS2



Cossack dancing: you're doing it wrong



You put your right foot in, your right foot out



"Wait, what are we queueing for?"



The ball-shaped pinata was unbreakable

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** SPORT | **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 7 | **DISTRIBUTOR:** MINDSCAPE
DEVELOPER: WINNING ELEVEN PRODUCTIONS | **PLAYERS:** 1-7 | **RRP:** \$109.95

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2011

Comeback King or footballing Has-Been?

You've seen the score. No, *Pro Evolution 2011* isn't as good as *FIFA 11*. We've said it every year since *FIFA 09* and the situation hasn't changed this year. Now that's out of the way, on with the review.

Seabass and his gang of merry football tailors have again taken the defibrillator to their ageing benchmark. Rather than provide an entirely revamped experience – which was needed – they've cobbled together just enough new stuff to inspire the bullet points on the back of the pack.

The keynote feature is the new Shot & Stamina Gauge that highlights each player's current state of fitness and how handy he is on the pitch. Sprinting around like a cattle dog diminishes player energy and leads to rubbish passes. Its other use allows players more control over their passes, much like *FIFA*'s new passing system, to open the game up with analogue opportunities across the field.

Additionally there's other stuff, like improved goalkeeping and admittedly brilliant animation. The problem is, as welcome as this is, the on-field action hasn't undergone radical improvement.

On the park it just isn't clever. While the 360 controls from last year have been tweaked, and the huge assortment of strategies, dribbles, and pass types are still here, *Pro Evolution* lacks sophistication. The ball is still yet to be liberated from the fishing

wire around dribbler's ankles, the AI isn't aggressive – letting players stride through the midfield – and the promised physicality and momentum is unconvincing.

Ironically this footballing stalwart, long considered to be a guardian of the pure game, is more goal heavy than its EA rival. Its biggest draw card, it's likely to become a fortress for those exhausted with braving *FIFA*'s midfield maw. *Pro Evolution 2011* has even increased the ease with which players perform arsy trick moves to break through opposing backlines, with the full array of flips and spins able to be mapped to the right stick.

This series is no longer for football puritans. It's for *Pro Evolution* puritans, and has the same strengths and weaknesses as the last few iterations. The animation and player models are brilliant, but there's still an oppressive, drab tone that could suck the fun out of a Happy Meal. Increased team and comp licenses, such as the UEFA Cup and South American Cup, add authenticity but it's the Master League that's set for accolades. Players can now compete with other managers online to see who is the superior football strategist. Call it a case of Konami playing to the brand's strengths. And who can blame them?

Aside from these glories, *Pro Evolution 2011* is behind *FIFA 11* in every other notable way. Yes, passing and movement have

received subtle improvements, but we're not buying the "improved" AI and the dribbling and tackling need to be rebuilt. Football fans may want a copy in case they need a *FIFA* hiatus, but the series is in desperate need of a cracking make over. **James Ellis**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Sensational animations and replay effects collide with drab colours and unintuitive menus.

SOUND

Commentary is only so-so, and the music is horrible. Solid crowd atmosphere during play.

CONTROLS

There's a greater sense of control – if you have the ball! Defensively it all feels a bit stilted.

REPLAY VALUE

Ageing as it is, it's still a solid net rocker. If you love the series you'll get a good six months play out of it.

VERDICT

Perfect for a quick goal fix, still second best overall. PES disciples will fawn over the improvements.

7



MESSIN' ABOUT

Cover boy Lionel Messi is a huge score for Konami. While he couldn't alter Argentina's destiny in the World Cup, he's consistently touted as the best player in the world. Surprisingly he was diagnosed with a growth hormone deficiency at age 11, and Barcelona quickly offered to pay his medical bills each month if he moved from Argentina to Spain to play for the club. The rest, as they say, is history.

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**BRONZE
AWARD**



"We're used to dealing with all sorts of demons, gods and monsters..."

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** ADVENTURE | **RELEASE:** NOW | **DISTRIBUTOR:** NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS | **DEVELOPER:** NINJA THEORY | **PLAYERS:** 1 | **RRP:** \$109.95

ENSLAVED: ODYSSEY TO THE WEST

Born from an egg on the mountain top...

The TV show *Monkey* may be before the time of a few gamers today, but that doesn't make the concept of a kick-ass monkey-man any less irrepressible. While it may sound punalicious, *Enslaved: Odyssey to the West* apes the old '70s TV series magnificently, despite the futuristic setting.

There have been some tweaks to the classic cast but the often humorous dynamic between them remains unchanged. Monkey is an all powerful brute who packs an extendable staff, rides a cloud (now a hi-tech hoverboard) and has been coerced into behaving himself via a slave-chip headband. Pigsy represents a fat, bald little mental patient with a plasma rifle, and he spends every spare minute trying to mack onto Trip(itaka). Have no fear, the latter is a tech-savvy version of *Heavenly Sword's* beautiful heroine Nariko, opposed to the male priest played by a female actor in the TV series.

Enslaved is pitched as a 'tactical action adventure' game that is set 150 years from now. A global war has decimated the Earth, nearly eradicated the entire human race and has left lethal mech soldiers roaming the land. Monkey and Trip escape a mysterious slaver

ship and form a jagged alliance to make their way West. Playing as Monkey you're essentially the brawn of the group, Trip works technological mechanisms that allow you to platform your way through the environment, while Pigsy offers both sniper support and a truffle shuffle run animation.

Your time is broken up between shellacking robots with your power staff, swinging about the ever-collapsing skeleton of New York and issuing Trip basic teamwork commands to beat environmental puzzles. Most of the time these three processes are executed simply and elegantly – but there are times when the game is perhaps too helpful and basic. For example, Trip has the ability to use a dragonfly camera to explore areas before you enter them, which minimises any chance of being surprised. The trade-off is tactical awareness that lets you snipe weakened mechs with your staff's projectile burst or you can get Trip to distract enemies while you sneak up behind them.

The combat takes a while to warm up and though every encounter looks extremely cinematic it is wanting for more combos and depth. Likewise the platforming sections look fantastic thanks to Andy Serkis' mo-cap scrambling, but every climbable surface is made insultingly obvious by big flashing indicators. Being shown a spelunking solution isn't a sin in itself but when this obviousness is married with linear climb paths that refuse to let you screw up, *Enslaved* feels like it ties you too tight to its apron strings. Sure, there are a few climbs where you have to move quick lest your path collapses, but these can be blitzed through by simply pressing jump twice as fast as before.

Unfortunately, the framerate in *Enslaved* proves to be just as sloppy and unreliable as one

WORSE THAN

UNCHARTED 2



BETTER THAN

HEAVENLY SWORD



of Monkey's handholds. But while the game's visuals are marred by such over-ambition and texture pop-in, you can see Ninja Theory has evolved from *Heavenly Sword*. Post-apocalyptic urban decay has never looked this beautiful and there are a few breathtaking moments.

Similarly, the facial animations, the explosive combat moves and virtual acting are all top-notch, elevating *Enslaved* to being an above-average action game. Also, there's an enthralling story being told here with entertaining characters and it proves difficult to put the controller down. **A Adam Mathew**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Wonderful animations and environments that get a little spoilt by the odd eyesore glitch.

SOUND

Fantastic voice work and satisfying battle thunks. The musical score felt non-existent.

CONTROLS

Monkey climbs and kicks-arse like a dream. Almost too well in some spots.

REPLAY VALUE

Once the credits roll there isn't much here to draw you back. DLC is supported though.

VERDICT

A fun platforming action romp. It's a marvellous interpretation of an ancient story, too.

8



"...he prays them helpless then we thump them!"



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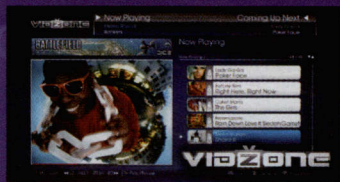
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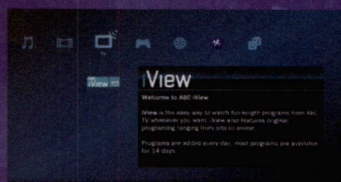
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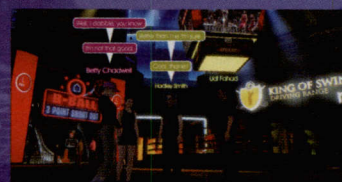
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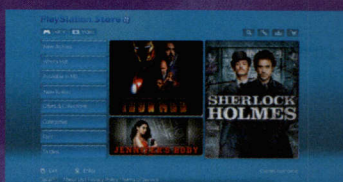
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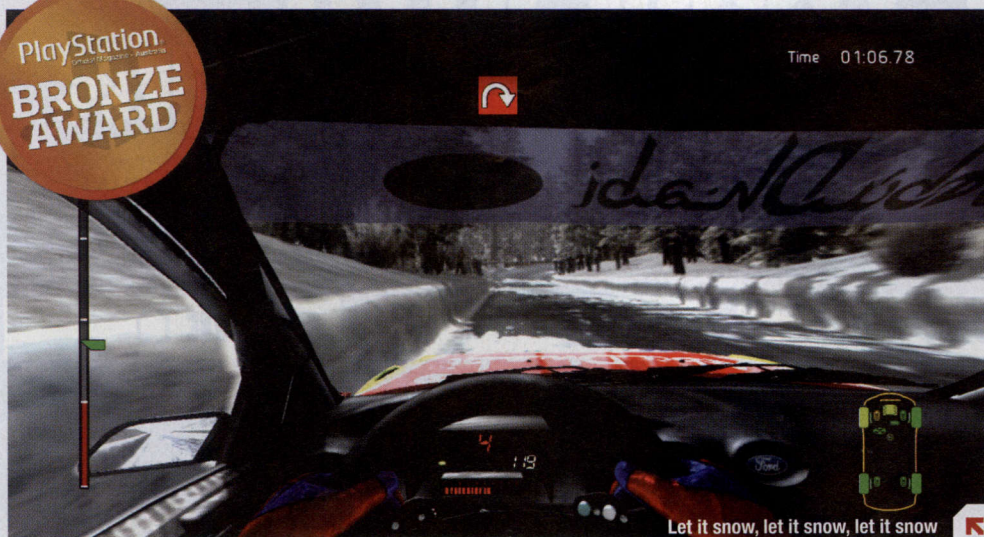
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PlayStation
BRONZE
AWARD



Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: RACING | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: AFA
DEVELOPER: MILESTONE | PLAYERS: 1 | RRP: \$99.95

WRC

Rallying's back on track

It's been roughly a year since we first lamented over *DiRT 2*, specifically the X-Games extreme bullshit attitude that turned a legendary rally series into a joke – regular readers will know it's a sore spot. Black Bean has taken on the official WRC licence to inject some real rallying back into your PlayStation and we're rapt that they've made a pretty good fist of it.

You can't deny *WRC*'s touted stats have authenticity. All the countries, all the teams, and also the J-WRC and the S-WRC. The latter is the future of the WRC so it makes perfect sense to have them included here. We're really pleased that the licence has been treated with so much respect, and that the team has absolutely nailed the driving model.

You're given three choices for your driving model, from the hand-holding auto-braking scaredy-cat option to oh-my-god-I'm-going-to-die. We settled in the middle for most of our time, touching on the hardcore mode after getting comfy in the driver's seat. It's quite twitchy at first and the cars tend to understeer more than you'd expect, but when you're threading your machine through skinny Swedish snow banks, and feathering the throttle as you skid across Jordanian dirt, it feels amazing.

WHEEL DEAL

WRC supports Logitech wheels, and we played this with a G27. It eliminated some of the twitchiness and after fiddling with the settings to make it tighter we were reluctant to go back to a normal pad. We've said it before and will probably keep saying it, it's a great wheel. With the amount of racing games out and coming out, getting one of these makes a lot of sense.



Not Loeb, so not winning



The grip across surfaces changes but the sound of each could be better

While it takes the most patient person to want to bypass the *WRC* beasts and instead start at the lower-powered cars, you'll reap so much more out of it if you do – we just don't want you to be put-off by not immediately feeling in control. The front-wheel drive cars are still a lot of fun to fang through the dust and grit, tarmac rallies are similarly enchanting. Smartly, Milestone have also included a Rally School – something that should be in every rally game, really – that explains the surfaces and some of the techniques you need to know.

There's a massive difference between the smaller 2WD cars and the beefy 4WD motors, and you'll start at the bottom end in your rally career with hopes of being spotted and picked up by a major team and sponsor. It's a standard formula: race, win, earn money for new cars. We're totally fine with that; it's the driving that'll keep you hooked.

That's *WRC*'s appeal as it's a fairly serious game, and it's not going to win any beauty pageants despite its breakneck frame rate. Drab environment textures, particularly distant hills or objects, and a lacklustre front end let it down. Similarly, your male co-driver (there's a female as well) sounds like a South London version of the talking clock as his pace-notes are quite stilted.

You should also get him (or her) to read them slightly in advance else you'll find yourself screaming down the wrong side of a mountain. Its sound design needs more work in post-production – we wanted to hear more

gravel spitting up at the underside of the car and throaty engine effects. As it stands it's not always convincing.

These are valid criticisms but they shouldn't stop you from buying this. It's a superb rally game in every sense of the phrase, capturing the spirit and the thrills. Recommended. **Paul Taylor**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Super car models and frame rate, but vanilla environments and lighting effects are disappointing.

SOUND

The co-driver's are quite robotic and the effects would've benefited with more polish.

CONTROLS

Sublime. It leans more towards a sim angle but is totally accessible. Go to Rally School and you'll be sweet.

REPLAY VALUE

There's lots to see and do here, and downloadable Group B cars will prolong its time in your PS3.

VERDICT

A joyfully robust driving model that takes little getting used to. Pity about the drab graphics.

8

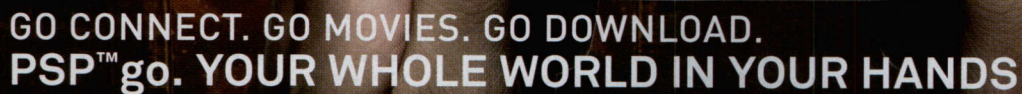


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PlayStation Portable



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Not pictured: Jerry Seu Seu (or I see you too, Jerry Jerry)

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | **GENRE:** SPORTS | **RELEASE:** NOW | **DISTRIBUTOR:** HES
DEVELOPER: BIG ANT | **PLAYERS:** 1-4 | **RRP:** \$109.95

RUGBY LEAGUE LIVE

Deadset lacking in the fair dinkum department

Rugby league is a great game. It's kinetic and hard-hitting; a mesh of brute force and pinpoint precision as blokes measured in fridge-esque dimensions butt heads while pocket-sized men dart around like greyhounds on a near-lethal amount of cocaine. Rugby league is awesome. *Rugby League Live*, however, isn't.

RLL is playable. As far as a simple facsimile of the basic principles of rugby league goes, *RLL* works. It features decent player likenesses and authentic strips and stadiums. If you liked *Rugby League 2* you probably won't hate this.

We welcome its arrival, if only because a passable game is better than none at all.

The list of problems, however, is long.

The biggest issue is content. *RLL* contains

less depth in modes than *RL2* back on PS2. The absence of a franchise mode in *RLL* is a massive oversight. Rather than building a squad over a number of seasons, trading and training players and so forth, you have two options: play one season of random fixtures or play the 2010 season.

Playing the 2010 season feels bogus as it is thanks to the absolutely nonsensical approach to team ratings, which seems to have a huge effect on simulated games. What you get is a season that bears no resemblance to the current comp. You'd think a game released in September 2010 would have a good grasp on the quality of sides in the 2010 competition. It's hard to ignore the fact that, at 79, the Dragons share the exact same team rating as the Cowboys. At the time of the game's release, the Dragons just secured the minor premiership. Discounting the Storm on zero points, the Cowboys are last. Can you imagine the rapid series of explosive aneurysms that'd occur stateside if *NBA 2K11* came out and had the Lakers on equal footing with the worst team in the NBA? Bedrooms all over the US would be covered in brain.

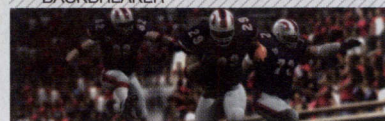
It's really not good enough that nobody at Big Ant noticed that. It makes you wonder if they've actually followed the footy at all this year.

It's just one symptom of the overall lack of attention to detail. You can't edit rosters and you can't add custom players into the line-ups. There are no tutorials either. This game has a mean difficulty curve and without tutorials it's surprisingly inaccessible at first.

There are no user-controlled action replays where you can get the camera in nice and close, like other sports games. We imagine having one would expose all the skating around the players are doing and how you're being rorted out of legitimate line-breaks by defensive players virtually teleporting into tackles. There are no set-plays anyways, so there's no cool, highlight-reel stuff to see.

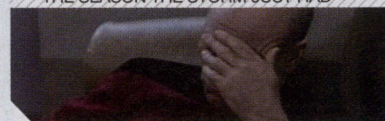
WORSE THAN

BACKBREAKER



BETTER THAN

THE SEASON THE STORM JUST HAD



It's just so up and down. Players can dodge and shift into tackles at the speed of light, but they take forever to play or pass the ball and surge out of the ruck. Nobody's moving after the play-the-ball – you're always passing to flat-footed teammates. Gameplay sliders may have helped here but they're like premiership trophies at Cronulla. Absent.

The recycled commentary is also horrifically repetitive. Vossy calls most players by their position rather than their surname and we're going to lose our biscuits if he keeps banging on about our sloppy play-the-balls.

As it stands, *RLL* is a functional interpretation of league but it feels old and fake. We know Big Ant are from Melbourne, but there's nothing organic about the way *RLL* cheats with physics. **A Luke Reilly**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Nice in some areas but extremely basic and rushed in others.

SOUND

Sparse, cut-and-paste commentary, budget effects. Nothing fancy here.

CONTROLS

They work but it's up to you to work out how to exploit them properly.

REPLAY VALUE

Stands up far better in multiplayer but online is plagued by early quitters.

VERDICT: Not as complete a game as *Rugby League 2* was and doesn't look that much better. Disappointing.

5



Parra: they're better in the game than real-life right now

BACKBREAKER TO THE DRAWING BOARD

If HES has a plan for the future of this franchise we hope it includes buying a copy of *Backbreaker*, playing it and getting on the phone to NaturalMotion.

The euphoria tech that powers *Backbreaker*, if it's affordable, would be perfect for a rugby league game. *Backbreaker* features crushing tackles, every one of them unique (requiring no mo-cap or keyframing). It features players with real inertia who move, accelerate and dodge at realistic speeds. It features hits that feel like hits. The key point is it does all this in a budget, bargain-bin title.

If NaturalMotion wants to see euphoria in sports games it'd be mad not to come to the table. Bolt on the new professional rugby league comp due to start in the US in 2011 and it may even receive American attention.

DEAD RISING 2

An action game with brraaaaaaiiins

INFO

FORMAT: PS3
GENRE: ACTION
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: BLUE CASTLE GAMES
PLAYERS: 1-2
RRP: \$109.95

Within 30 minutes you'll figure out that *Dead Rising 2* is all about being creative with tools of destruction.

Anything you can pick up becomes a weapon, from pissy coathangers and suspicious looking 12-inch 'massager's that fall out of handbags, to MMA gloves, sledgehammers, fire axes, guitars, handguns and automatic rifles.

Melee weapons provide the most fun as zombies fall apart like a tender piece of lamb, and the point where bladed weapons make



contact with zombie flesh is where they cut. It's a damn impressive effect and while you'll be steeped in blood and gore (leading man Chuck Greene gets very red very quickly) the game is hilarious. *Dead Rising 2*'s balance of intentional and coincidental comedy, absurdity and the satisfaction of literally cutting down thousands of zombies is its hook, while side-show attractions



such as dressing Chuck in myriad costumes keeps things fun.

Sure, there's a story – Chuck has to survive for 72 hours in the zombie-infested gambling paradise Fortune City whilst finding medicine for his young daughter – and the plot keeps things on track, giving the game some depth. Its most impressive aspect though is being able to combine objects together to create unconventional zombie-slaying implements, such as an RC helicopter with knives for rotor blades, or the infamous drillbucket.

So, yes, *Dead Rising 2* is what you wanted it to be, but it unfortunately suffers on a technical level with too many loading screens and bogus screen tearing. Despite these minor setbacks this is one of 2010's best games. **A Paul Taylor**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Pretty slick, except for screen tearing problems.

SOUND

Zombie grunts and muzak. Works well!

CONTROLS

Once Chuck levels up you'll be engrossed.

REPLAY VALUE

This could well last you until this time next year.

VERDICT:

You'll wear a stupid grin pretty much from start to finish, and it's a riot in co-op. A must-buy.

9

GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK

Epic show or brutal blow?

INFO

FORMAT: PS3
GENRE: MUSIC
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT
PLAYERS: 1-8
RRP: \$109.95

If we had to sum up *Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock*, reportedly the last GH game to be developed by Neversoft, in one word it would be: serviceable.

WOR ticks the appropriate boxes for a rhythm game. It has a heavier settlist than GH5, although the casual set will likely find a lot of this lesser-known music alienating.

What it doesn't do, however, is evolve the series in any truly beneficial way. Rather than make meaningful improvements to the core of the game itself Neversoft has focused on the more immediate gimmicks. For instance, we'd have preferred Neversoft added more life to the crowds and have them chant and sing along so we could really feel like we're on stage rather than tapping along to a CD in front of a herd of voiceless automatons.

Instead we get a fairly shameless riff on *Brütal Legend* for a career mode, but without any of the latter's spice or charm. The whole transform-into-a-heavy-metal-monster thing is a bit cack-handed too.



Shoehorning 'Bohemian Rhapsody' in was a mistake that'll only serve to highlight the limitations of the ageing heart of WOR come the arrival of *Rock Band 3* (which also has 'Bohemian Rhapsody'). Charting so much piano to a guitar controller makes about as much sense as breast-feeding a piranha. The special powers and additional challenges are all just window dressing. None of it made the game feel any more fun to us.

With Double Fine alleging that Activision dropped *Brütal Legend* after a failed attempt to convert the game into a GH sequel we're surprised Activision actually went on to do this. **B Luke Reilly**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Nice new character designs but becoming dated.

SOUND

Lacks live atmosphere. Has 'Love Gun' by KISS.

CONTROLS

No massive changes to report.

REPLAY VALUE

Still not as party friendly as *GHIII* was.

VERDICT:

Functional and fun enough in bursts but it just isn't evolving at the same rate as its peers.

7

WORSE THAN

RED FACTION: GUERRILLA

BETTER THAN

TRANSFORMERS: WAR FOR CYBERTRON

INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: DOUBLE HELIX GAMES | PLAYERS: 1-8 | RRP: \$109.95

FRONT MISSION EVOLVED

The game where you can tinker with your Wanzer

IT'S EVOLUTION, BABY

Front Mission Evolved's forefathers were (bar one – *Front Mission: Alternative*) turn-based tactical RPGs and the series is about as old as *Tekken*. You've probably never heard of it, let alone played it, since the only title in the franchise to appear in PAL territories was *Front Mission 3* way back in August 2000. That title's just had the dust blown off and was released on the PSN a month or so ago.

Oh, Transformers?" That's what we heard from spectators when we were playing *Front Mission Evolved*.

You can't blame them really, as *Evolved's* main attraction is massive, angular robots bashing or shooting the hell out of each other with massive, angular weapons. Plus the sound effects could've been ripped straight from Michael Bay's library of whooshes, zooms and explosions. Unlike Trannies there's a human pilot inside the Wanzers – that's your giant, angular robot – and even earnest engineers like Dylan Ramsey are marvellous at zigzagging around, unleashing a torrent of machine gun fire and rockets.

You're only ever a few seconds away from

firing a weapon, or dodging rockets from enemy Wanzers. Your bot can carry something in each hand – shotgun, rifle, glorified big stick, machine gun or a sniper rifle in both – and a rocket launcher on each shoulder. Strap on a backpack and you can skate around like Chazz Michael Michaels or cram in a bit more ammo. We say forget the latter and go with the mobility pack as ammo drops are littered all over the battlefield.

Missions are strictly linear and the enemies don't seem to change that much between them, save for the odd predictable boss fight. They get tougher as the stages progress but there are only a few different types, and nearly all can be demolished in pretty much the same way. Smarter AI and level design could've masked this, or at the least made it more entertaining.

Capping foes earns you credits, and in between sorties you can upgrade your Wanzer with a new head, torso, arms and legs, or even give it a bitchin' paint job. This customisation is by far the coolest part of the game and towards the end you'll unlock some truly radical bits for your bot. It's a shame that the challenge gets very repetitive but it's engaging in short bursts.

You'll suffer a few dumb missions; our least favourites are the couple where you have to equip your

Wanzer with four crab-like legs. There's little reason for forcing you to do this and it makes absolutely no sense, as your cohorts and enemies all have the standard two. At least they're not as bland as the on-foot missions, where *Evolved* seems to have taken a lesson from the *Dark Void* School of Action Games.

Evolved's fun but you'll feel little attachment to it and once the campaign's over you won't ache to go back through. Multiplayer's available but we weren't able to test it before going to print – more next issue. Its story has more melodrama than a season of *The Days of Our Lives* and *Neighbours* combined, and pantomime-esque bad guys. Despite all its cool customisation and explosion-packed stages *Evolved* feels like another competent action game that's more flat than fab. **Paul Taylor**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Environments are varied but a bit dull. Giant robots look really cool though.

SOUND

You'll never get sick of hearing Wanzers fire up their boosters and rocket fire is tasty.

CONTROLS

Robust and easy to get to grips with but unless you're dashing about it's a bit slow.

REPLAY VALUE

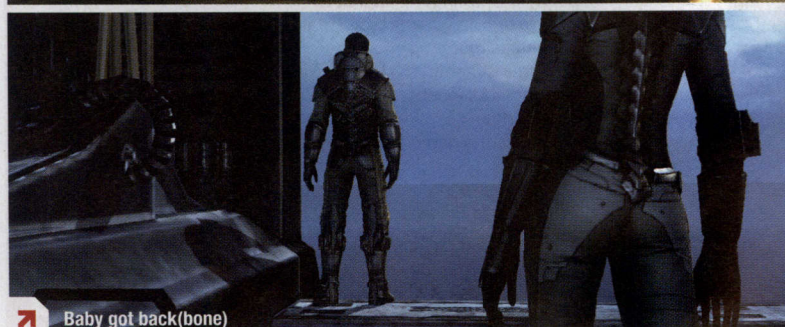
It's pretty linear but there are heaps of tiny collectibles to find. They don't do much, though.

VERDICT

Likable but limited: the campaign's a perfect distraction for a week or so.

7

Robots: they'll always do our bidding (and never enslave mankind)



Baby got back(bone)

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PS3



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PlayStation
Official PlayStation Award
BRONZE AWARD

available. *Castle Crashers* also incorporates an RPG element, giving you points to spend on various attributes. Weapons also alter your stats, so while it's a simple system you're able to customise just how you want to play. Each knight has a special power according to their colour – lighting, fire, poison and ice – and with three mates the onscreen action gets pretty frantic. Online play's incorporated but local multi's quite special and a more robust. It's the best way to play, as soloists may struggle – especially against enemies with ranged attacks – but it's really just more fun this way. **Paul Taylor**

CASTLE CRASHERS

Silly, knees-bent, running-about, advancing behaviour

INFO

FORMAT: PSN
GENRE: ACTION
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: THE BEHEMOTH
DEVELOPER: THE BEHEMOTH
PLAYERS: 1-4
RRP: TBA

The PSN has come alive of late with side-scrolling adventures. *Shank*, *Scott Pilgrim vs The World*, *Final Fight*, and *DeathSpank* have all punched, sliced, kicked and pile-driven (pile-drove?) their way across your screens in the last few months. While *Castle Crashers* is a couple of years old, appearing on Another Console back in '08, it's one of the strongest and freshest out of the bunch around.

The artwork and general presentation helps

enormously. From the knights to the bad guys and monsters everything's hand-drawn with thick black lines, and looks truly lush; cartoony but still menacing. The knights themselves have a lot of charm and it's amazing just how expressive a character with two dots and a smudge for a nose can be.

Combat is both satisfyingly bloody and bloody satisfying with two attack buttons and a magic modifier as your tools of destruction, and as you level up new combinations become

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

You'll go gaga over the cartoon graphics. Slick.

SOUND

A neat digital soundtrack to complement the action.

CONTROLS

Refined and easy to grasp, plus the neat RPG elements add depth.

REPLAY VALUE

Quick to finish but it begs multiple playthroughs

VERDICT

Fun solo but it shines when you play it with mates. It does what *Scott Pilgrim* should've.

8

FLIGHT CONTROL HD

Roger, Roger. What's our vector, Victor?

INFO

FORMAT: PSN
GENRE: PUZZLE
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: FIREMINT
DEVELOPER: FIREMINT
PLAYERS: 1-4
RRP: \$8.45

Do you have a job? Book holidays immediately. Girlfriend, boyfriend? Dump them, or tell them not to call for the next few weeks. We've found one of the most addictive and accessible PSN titles available.

The premise is simple. Take your pick from nine airfields, including an airport with a day/night cycle, and guide the various aircraft that appear on screen to their landings strips or helipads. Planes and choppers won't deviate from the set course, and if any are on a collision course you've got to quickly intervene. The catch is that each kite and whirly is colour coded and must go to their particular strip or pad.



Left alone with no instruction they'll just fly around in a random pattern, and there's no limit to the amount of aircraft that spawn and demand your attention. The stage ends when two or more planes or copters collide.

And that's about it.

There are no powerups, bonus stages or bullet-time gimmicks, just you, your wits and a swarm of pilots who need guidance. It is old school yet modern, a textbook example of timeless design. Sony's new Move inspired the conversion to the PS3 and the motion controls are the best way to play, being utterly instinctive. Using a DualShock isn't as precise but snapping between craft is a bit quicker. 3D TVs are also supported.

The only gripe we have is that there's no competitive multiplayer, only co-op, but Trophy support and online leaderboards offset that. Support your local games industry and purchase immediately. **Paul Taylor**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

1080p, bold and beautiful artwork.

SOUND

The looping soundtrack reminds us of summer holidays.

CONTROLS

With Move it's blissful.

REPLAY VALUE

Light on maps but high score fiends won't care.

VERDICT

Charming and addictive, this demands just one more go. Get this onto your PS3 now.

9



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EXIT



It's up to Mr. ESC to guide unfortunate victims to an exit in this PSP-only adventure-puzzle game. Perfect for playing on the bus.

VANQUISH DEMO



Platinum Games are on form, following up their super sexy *Bayonetta* with another lush action title. Plus, robots.

ALIEN BREED



Another Amiga classic given the 21st Century treatment. This stylish top-down shooter looks great!

SHANK DEMO



Another demo that installs the whole game – it's big, clocking 2GB – but you'll be impressed enough to buy it.

R.U.S.E. DEMO



Not into real-time strategy games? This may just change your mind – and the full game has Move support, too.

NEWS

PSN DEVELOPMENTS

What you can expect to see and play on the PSN

A couple of cult titles are being distributed via PSN in the coming months. Fans of *Abe's Oddysee* should be pleased to know Lorne Lanning's 2005 title *Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath*, which has never been released on a PlayStation platform, is due early next year. Just Add Water (JAW), the developer that made the impressive *Gravity Crash*, is responsible for the port and is promising 720p graphics along with more detail for characters and support for PlayStation Move.

"*Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath* is the first project in what we believe will be a long and fruitful relationship," said Stewart Gilray, Managing Director of JAW. "Having the chance to update this great title and release it on PS3 is just a brilliant opportunity, not least for us, but for the fans too." *Stranger's Wrath* is part of Lanning's *Oddworld Inhabitants* series, encompassing *Abe's Oddysee* and *Exodus*, and was put on an indefinite hold after *Stranger's Wrath* was released back in '05.

The classic platformer *Putty Squad* is also going to be brought back from obscurity later this year for PSP and PS3. The titular Putty is a stretchy blue blob that can transform himself into various shapes and objects to traverse a level. Released on the SNES but also developed for the Amiga 1200, *Putty Squad*'s hero can morph into a fist to punch enemies, stretch sideways to cover gaps in platforms and absorb objects. The game was also in development for the PS2 way back in 2003 but due to complications with programmers' contracts it was never released. The original game, *Putty*, on the Amiga 500, was considered a classic for its time but, while we're looking forward to battling homicidal carrots and clockwork



oranges, we're just unsure if a 16-year-old game is still as great as we remember it to be.

Finally, PSN Plus subscribers can expect the following during October:

- PSN: *Street Fighter 2 HD Remix* minis: *Aero Racer*, *Yeti Sports*
- PSone classic: *Syphon Filter*
- Full game trial: *Gravity Crash* (Plus exclusive 50% discount for Plus members on purchase), *Hustle Kings* (Plus exclusive 50% discount for Plus members on purchase)
- Exclusive discounts: *Burn Zombie Burn* (inc. free exclusive Home item for Plus members who buy)
- Dynamic themes: Exclusive Move 'Start the Party' theme, Exclusive 'Halloween' theme
- Premium avatars: aPain: Jarvis and Le Toot Avatars, SingStar: Wannabe and Rising Star Avatars



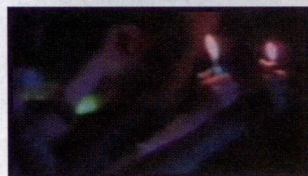
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This month we look at the best songs in the Power Ballads Channel



BONNIE TYLER - 'TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART'

You need three things for a power ballad. Firstly, harmonies. Bonus points when used in a 'call and response'.



EUROPE - 'THE FINAL COUNTDOWN'

Secondly, a kick-arse riff that makes the kids lose their shit, encouraging them to raise their lighters.



KINGS OF LEON - 'USE SOMEBODY'

Thirdly, lots and lots of hair. Doesn't matter if it's on the top of your head or wrapped around your face.

VIDZONE

VidZone is the largest online music video VOD service in the world, and it's available free on PS3. Download the vidzone application and you'll have access to over 13,000 music videos at the push of a button!

WHAT IS PSN?

The PlayStation Network (PSN) is free to join and free to play. No subscription is required to play online. You'll be able to communicate with friends, access the PlayStation Store and download demos, add-ons, trailers, PSN games, PSone classics and blockbuster movies!



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DLC

BIOSHOCK 2: MINERVA'S DEN

The world's most vicious rumpus room

The good news: *Minerva's Den* is the best piece of *BioShock 2* DLC available. It presents a brand new story, areas, weapons and characters, as you step into the boots of another recently awakened Big Daddy, Subject Sigma.

You're going in to see The Thinker, the computer core that controls much of Rapture, and following the story of Charles Milton Porter, creator of The Thinker. The narrative is the juicy marrow of *Minerva's Den*, delivering an emotional story of a man torn apart by loss. It's what *BioShock* is best at, and its impact will stay with you after you've spent three or four hours back underwater.

If you just want to shoot stuff you're catered for, too. The new plasmid, Gravity Well, is perfect for mass Splicer decimation, and the Ion Laser burns anything it touches.

The Splicers themselves are also armed with plasmids and there are a few Big Daddies who can turn their own Ion Laser onto Subject Sigma, so watch out.

There's a lot of familiarity too, with more gripping Little Sister/Big Daddy fracas and tense moments littered throughout.

The bad news? This is the last lot of DLC for Rapture. A shame, really, as *BioShock Infinite* is still more than a year away, so more content like this would have been truly welcome. *Minerva's Den* and its powerful story is highly recommended.

INFO

GENRE: SHOOTER
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: 2K GAMES
DEVELOPER: 2K MARIN
PLAYERS: 1
RRP: \$12.95

VERDICT:

Back on form and demonstrating what the grim setting of Rapture can do for a story. You'd be a fool to not download this.

DLC

MAFIA II: JIMMY'S VENDETTA

The wise guy's wise guy

Following on from the PS3-exclusive DLC *The Betrayal of Jimmy*, *Vendetta* is more of the same. Vito and Joe's story is bypassed here, and instead you're taking charge of the titular Jimmy. This added piece is less about narrative and instead is all about action – an odd contrast for a game where the narrative was its main appeal.

Jimmy's missions can be described as being an open-world version of *The Club*. It's for more 'arcade' than the main game as you have to move around quickly, with headshots as your priority for the most amount of points.

Each mission is pretty small, and at the end you're ranked online against everyone else that's played it, so you're encouraged to go back and refine your technique to be quicker and quicker. If you loved *Mafia II*'s gunfights then you'll be happier than a sailor



in a cathouse to get to grips with it all over again. True, it's not a dynamic action game like, say, *Uncharted 2*, but it's robust enough to be palatable for those who like its style.

It's not all gravy. Where the main game got away with forcing you to drive all over town but here it's just a pain. Fistfights are still limp, too.

If you liked *Vendetta's* predecessor and want to embrace Empire Bay's environment then this is for you. It becomes a bit repetitive and it's strange that there's more story for a guy who really has no story, but *Jimmy's Vendetta* is worth checking out.

INFO

GENRE: ACTION
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: 2K GAMES
DEVELOPER: 2K CZECH
PLAYERS: 1
RRP: \$12.95

VERDICT:

In stark contrast to the main game, these bite-sized missions give you more of the same and prove to be a neat diversion.

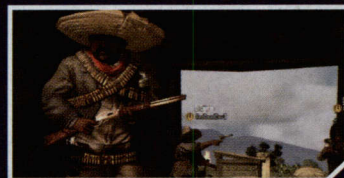
BEST GAMES TO PLAY ONLINE

Enemy AI making you yawn? Feel like conquering the world? Take your skills online with this quintet of fantastic multiplayer titles. These offer the best bang for your buck!



MODERN WARFARE 2

You can't argue with numbers. There are a tonne of competitors online, plus the DLC adds to the abundant options available.



RED DEAD REDEMPTION

The connection issues are fixed, so there's no excuse not to jump on, form a posse and start hunting for challenges.



SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV

It's like being in the arcades (remember those?) when you had a posse hanging around. Golden rule: winner stays on.



FIFA 10

Shooters aren't the only games that need explicit tactics, and the beautiful game is quietly brilliant with 10 versus 10 matches.



BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2

You'll be won over by the chaotic destruction and storming in to an enemy base on the back of a quad bike. You'll stay for the tactics.



MULTIPLAYER

KANE & LYNCH 2: DOG DAYS

Listen like thieves

INFO

GENRE:
ACTION
RELEASE:
NOW
DISTRIBUTOR:
NAMCO BANDAI
PARTNERS:
DEVELOPER:
IO INTERACTIVE
PLAYERS:
1-8
RRP:
\$109.95

At some point in the future an academic is going to present *Dog Days* as an example of human behaviour, just what we'll do to gain victory and reward, and the actions we'll take to inch above our fellow teammates.

Maybe then it'll get some attention because right now it's dead. It's easier to get people to randomly walk into your game of 'smell my fart', which is a pity because *Dog Days* doesn't stink.



It doesn't help that the options here are anaemic. There are three modes that are slight riffs of each other but the central concept is sound. In *Fragile Alliance* you and your cohorts must collect as much as cash as possible from the start of the stage, and make it to the escape vehicle before the timer runs out. Work as a team and everyone goes home with some money in their pocket to spend on new weaponry for the next round. If you feel confident that you can outsmart and outgun your brethren, turn on them to get all the cash. As soon as you do you're marked as a traitor, and anyone can kill you without being labelled one themselves. The catch, though, is that you may need as many teammates as possible to make it through the stage alive, and even if there is a traitor on your team it might make sense to leave them be to help you take out the police who are impeding your heist.

Undercover Cop is very similar, except one person in the team is the cop and must kill the other players without being caught. In *Cops and Robbers* there are two opposing teams, but we're pretty confident you can figure out what happens

here from the name alone.

Cleverly, your reputation will precede you in the lobby. Play it straight and you're labelled a saint. Knock off a few co-players and you're tagged as being shaky. It ascends *Dog Days'* gameplay from relying just on the strength of its gunplay to thinking about what your 'teammates' are going to do, how you're going to react, and what that will do for your own rep.

This psychological factor is what makes the game so appealing but because of its design and themes the multiplayer modes are limited in scope. The engine's just not strong or unique enough for an interesting straight-out death match. While we love that IO Interactive are bold enough to offer something that no-one else has done before, we just wish it did it better.

VERDICT:

A fantastic concept crippled by a lack of interest and options. You'll need some like-minded players to make this worth it.

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INTERMISSION

NEW RELEASES ON DVD & BLU-RAY

DIRECTOR: JON FAVREAU | **CAST:** ROBERT DOWNEY, JR., GWYNETH PALTROW, SCARLETT JOHANSSON, MICKEY ROURKE | **AVAILABLE ON:** DVD/BLU-RAY

IRON MAN 2 (M)

With the world now aware of his dual life as the armoured superhero Iron Man, billionaire inventor Tony Stark (Robert Downey, Jr.) faces pressure from the government, the press, and the public to share his technology with the military. Unwilling to let go of his invention, Stark, along with Pepper Potts (Gwyneth Paltrow), and James Rhodes (Don Cheadle) find themselves at the mercy of powerful new enemies.

Downey is in his element here once more, thanks to snappy dialogue and the action has also been kicked up another notch. A fairly solid sequel, as sequels go.

VERDICT:

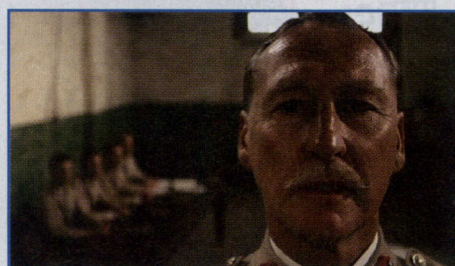
A little too much style over substance and not as refreshingly self-contained as the original. Still, it's a fun way to spend two hours.

8

IF YOU
LIKE THIS
TRY...

The Iron Giant

Why? Well, because both protagonists are... iron, you see.



BREAKER MORANT (M)

DIRECTOR: BRUCE BERESFORD

CAST: JACK THOMPSON, EDWARD WOODWARD, BRYAN BROWN, JOHN WATERS

AVAILABLE ON: BLU-RAY

Free history lesson. In South Africa, 1901, the British war against the Boers deteriorated into bitter guerrilla warfare. A unit of the Bushveldt Carbineers, made up mainly of Australians, is ordered by the British High Command to fight the Boer on its terms and take no prisoners; an order which will prove fatal to a man they call 'The Breaker' – Lieutenant Harry Morant.

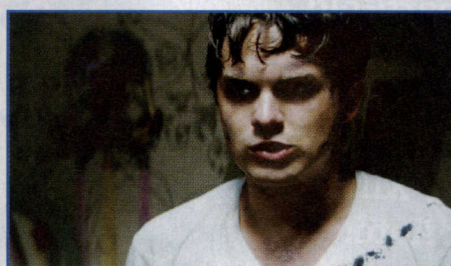
While the jury is still out as to whether Morant was a hero or a villain, it's undeniable that his exploits shook the British and made him a legend. The awesomely named Edward Woodward delivers a riveting performance as the soft-spoken commander and Bryan Brown is at his hot-tempered best.

This has been the benchmark Aussie movie that all other Australian filmmakers have strived to match.

VERDICT:

One of the greatest anti-war epics you're ever likely to see.

9



A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (MA15+)

DIRECTOR: SAMUEL BAYER

CAST: JACKIE EARLE HALEY, KELLAN LUTZ, KYLE GALLNER, ROONEY MARA

AVAILABLE ON: DVD/BLU-RAY

This utterly unnecessary 2010 remake of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is a textbook example of why you should never, ever mess with the classics.

On the surface the winning formula is still intact; a bunch of cardboard cut-out teenagers all dream of the same psycho who starts to pick them off one by one. Now, there's nothing we like better than watching Bieber lookalikes get shanked – but why did they have to ruin Freddy's classic mystique by making him a paedophile?

Other than fancy CGI dreamscapes, this reboot adds sweet bugger all to the actual retelling of the tale. And if you're re-treading the same scares from 1984, you're left with a pretty dull ride.

VERDICT:

The jolting horror points in this are obvious they're almost funny. Lame, funny.

2



EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP (M)

DIRECTOR: BANKSY

CAST: BANKSY, SHEPARD FAIREY, THIERRY GUETTA, RHYS IFANS, SPACE INVADER, JOSHUA LEVINE

AVAILABLE ON: DVD

Banksy is a street artist from Bristol, England, famous for his inventive and iconic graffiti. His work isn't about tagging public property; instead he creates satirical and politically scathing stencils that are so popular people often remove the surfaces his work covers.

This documentary is partly about Banksy, as the French-born Thierry Guetta sets out to work with the elusive artist, but the focus shifts to the character of Guetta. Guetta has captured hours and hours of footage of other street artists at work, and watching them in action is truly fascinating.

This is just the tale of top of a film that pokes fun at art critics, and viewers as well. Very, very clever.

VERDICT:

A gripping doco about one of the most elusive street artistsant. Worth multiple viewings.

9



THE LOSERS (MA15+)

DIRECTORS: SYLVAIN WHITE

CAST: JEFFREY DEAN MORGAN, ZOE SALDANA, CHRIS EVANS, IDRIS ELBA

AVAILABLE ON: DVD/BLU-RAY

An explosive action tale of betrayal and revenge, *The Losers* centres around an elite Special Forces unit sent to the Bolivian jungle on a search-and-destroy mission. But the team – Clay, Jensen, Roque, Pooch and Cougar – soon find that they have become the target of a deadly doublecross masterminded by a powerful enemy known only as Max (who may or may not be mad).

Though the team survives the ambush they're all presumed cactus by their enemies. Thus begins a quest to go deep undercover in a dangerous plot to clear their names and to kick their revenge on Max up to the max.

Though the editing and the CGI effects say modern movie the rest of the film screams trigger-happy '80s action. It's *Tropic Thunder* without the parody.

VERDICT:

It's funny, bursting with action and well worth a watch. Check your brain at the door.

8



ANIMAL KINGDOM (MA15+)

DIRECTOR: DAVID MICHÔD

CAST: JAMES FRECHEVILLE, BEN MENDELSON, JOEL EDGERTON, GUY PEARCE

AVAILABLE ON: DVD/BLU-RAY

This represents not just the best crime film ever made in Australia but we'd say one of the best crime films ever made at all – period.

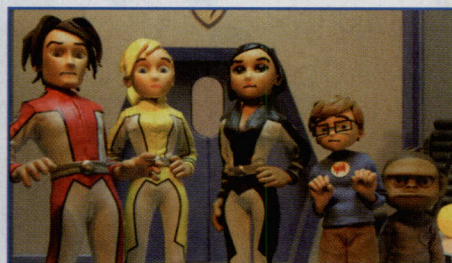
Animal Kingdom tells the tale of 17-year-old J (read: Josh) as he navigates his survival amongst an explosive criminal family and the detective who thinks he can save him. Clearly this is a crime drama that revolves around Melbourne's vicious underworld and is loosely inspired by the real events of the Walsh Street police shootings that occurred in Melbourne in 1988.

If you're a fan of the first season of *Underbelly*, you'll be in underworld heaven here. Tense and unrelenting, this is must watch Aussie cinema.

VERDICT:

A truly remarkable film that stays with you long after the credits roll.

9



TITAN MAXIMUM (MA15+)

DIRECTOR: TOM ROOT, MATTHEW SENREICH

CAST: SETH GREEN, BILLY DEE WILLIAMS, BRECKIN MEYER, DAN MILANO

AVAILABLE ON: DVD

This is the next evolution of deranged late-night comedy, as concocted by the incomparable mayhem-meisters at Adult Swim.

Titan Maximum improves on the sly gags and perverted stop-motion animation of *Robot Chicken* and boasts a plot as gripping as it is improbable: mankind's only hope is an elite force of obnoxious, alcoholic space sluts. Their secret weapon: punching everything in the crotch.

You don't need a wiki-like knowledge of the *Power Rangers* to enjoy *Titan Maximum*, just a very, very sick sense of humour. This is a nerd-gasm of sci-fi satire, and one of the funniest DVDs of the year, slotting in nicely next to your *Family Guy* collection.

VERDICT:

The creators of *Robot Chicken* have out-done themselves. Again.

9

Now available to rent or own on **PlayStation®Store**

The PlayStation Network Video Store offers hundreds of titles available to rent or own at the click of a button!

DIRECTOR: KATHRYN BIGELOW | **CAST:** HARRISON FORD, LIAM NEESON, PETER SARSGAARD, JOSS ACKLAND | **AVAILABILITY:** RENT \$4.99 (HD), \$3.99 (SD) | **SIZE:** 6328MB (HD) 1678 (SD)

K-19: THE WIDOWMAKER (M)

Honestly, when we first heard of this we had painful flashbacks of Sean Connery's 'Scot Russian' portrayal of a Russian sub commander. It's fortunate then that Harrison and Liam know how to put on a halfway decent accent.

In *K-19* it's the height of the 1960s Cold War and Russia launches a flagship nuclear submarine. Aboard this submarine are Captain Alexei Vostrikov (Ford) and popular executive officer Mikhail Polenin (Neeson). Tensions flare between the two, as they constantly clash, but both share the unwavering patriotism. When the vessel's nuclear reactor system begins to leak, the two men and their crew must work before they're both consigned to Davy Jones' locker for good.

The conundrum that follows is nicely paced and often claustrophobic as both the communication between two egos and the mechanical parts of the ship begin to breakdown. As you can imagine, the tension ratchets up even further when nuclear weapons are introduced. Solid, swift drama but not spectacular.

VERDICT:

The movie takes historical liberties in some spots, but it also exhibits hard-hitting drama done right.

7

TOP 10 MOVIES ON DEMAND

1. Cop Out
2. Clash of the Titans
3. The Blind Side
4. Green Zone
5. The Hurt Locker
6. The Men Who Stare at Goats
7. Unraveled
8. Aeon Flux
9. Shutter Island
10. Alice in Wonderland

INTERMISSION

IN CINEMAS



ANGEL EYES

An interview with *Legion* writer/director Scott Stewart

Q. How'd you get involved with the film?

A. I was originally hired to rewrite the script, which had been written by Peter Schink and was quite different. It was literally like a Hieronymus Bosch painting come to life. It would have been extraordinarily expensive.

Q. Why did you decide to cast Paul Bettany in the lead role?

A. In terms of casting him, [casting director] Rick Montgomery and I talked about a lot of different actors. I was always really interested – and so was Rick – in trying to do something less expected in terms of who could play this action role. There aren't that many people who look like they could be eternal. Paul has this thousand yard stare – Viggo Mortensen has it and Vincent Cassel too – but there aren't many that do and Paul does. I went on a campaign to convince him to do it. Turned out to be easier than I thought. I got to New York and was like, "It's really sophisticated" and he goes, "I just want to be in a zombie movie."

Q. Was it important his character have a British accent?

A. We talked a lot about the accent and for a little while it was just sort of a flat, non-regionally specific accent. Then, for some reason, we started talking about how when [Laurence] Olivier played a Roman he played it with a British accent. For some reason a certain kind of British accent sounds ancient.

Q. How did you feel when you were asked to direct your script?

A. Well, I had written it so I was kind of attached to it with David Lancaster, the producer. He was the one who controlled the script. When I had originally written it, it was another director and then it came back to me. It was gonna happen a bunch of times and didn't happen for whatever reason and David brought it back to me and said, "Everybody really liked the script and it was almost able to get across the finish line. Do you want to keep working on it with me?" I said, "Sure." And he said, "Would you like to direct it" and I said, "Funny you might ask."



DIRECTORS: JAY DUPLASS, MARK DUPLASS | **CAST:** JOHN C. REILLY, JONAH HILL, MARISA TOMEI, CATHERINE KEENER | **IN CINEMAS:** OCTOBER 14

CYRUS_(M)

John (Reilly) is a 40-something loser. Divorced for over half a decade, he lives by himself and is a complete slob.

Finally convinced by his ex-wife Jamie (Keener) to come to a party to try and meet new women, John falls in love with Molly (Tomei). After a few nights together he discovers she has an adult son, Cyrus (Hill), who makes experimental music and still lives with his mother. Cyrus is his mother's best friend and has an unconventional relationship with her. He's definitely not ready to share her with anyone, especially John, and the two of them soon start playing mind games with each other.

Despite the cast and the premise, this comedy doesn't rely on cheap gags or dumb jokes to get

its laughs. Everything's played with great subtlety and there's an effective feeling of discomfort that overarches John and Cyrus' relationship – you're never quite sure what Cyrus is going to do next, and whether he's being sincere or a painful shit.

Hill's normally cast as either a goofball or chump – he's neither here. His character has a plan, and if you're tired of seeing him in the roles he's usually typecast into you'll love this. John C. Reilly does a great job in the lead, and while seeing him paired him with the delightful Tomei may be a bit incongruous at first they actually have great chemistry.

The story at its heart is very simple, and the movie relies on your investment in the characters to keep you hooked. Very, very funny.

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BRAID
DEVELOPER: Hothead
PLAYERS: 1



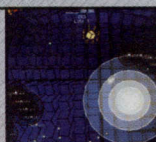
A charming platformer that incorporates one of last decade's most used mechanics – time manipulation – whilst wrapped up in gorgeous graphics. Incredibly addictive and charming as hell, it's made even better when you discover it was all made by one man. Buy it.

WIPEOUT HD
DEVELOPER: SCE
PLAYERS: 1-8



Yes, it's a HD remix of tracks from the PSP versions, but *HD* is too sublime to ignore. Utterly gorgeous, running at a blistering framerate and handles superbly. Mandatory. We may not have a fully-fledged PS3 version of the series for now, but this will do fine.

EVERYDAY SHOOTER
DEVELOPER: Queasy Games
PLAYERS: 1



Don't be fooled by the sparse art style. This cunningly blends music in with the action that turns it from a dual-stick shooting whimsy into a highly addictive blaster. It's very easy to lose hours and hours to this game as you strive to make it through the tough stages.

FLOWER
DEVELOPER: thatgamecompany
PLAYERS: 1



High concept and totally pretty, it plays like a dream. Guide petals on the wind using the motion-sensing of your DualShock 3. You will be amazed. More than one *OPS* staffer has lost sleep trapped in this game.

MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2
DEVELOPER: Capcom
PLAYERS: 1-2



It's by no means "straight" *Street Fighter*, and nor should it. Stuffed with 56 characters, this three-on-three brawler is a visual and aural explosion. The HD treatment is superbly done. If you're a fighting nut, you should have this already.

BIONIC COMMANDO REARMED
DEVELOPER: GRIN
PLAYERS: 1



Bionic Commando Rearmed is a prime example of what many love about the PSN: being a platform for updates of classics. It's pure gameplay – and rock hard. We don't know why you'd bother playing the recent remake instead.

SIMPLY THE BEST...

The best of the best of the best of the *best*

ADVENTURE



GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

"*GTAIV* is a game 10 out of 10 was designed for – a game that takes your rising, constantly spiralling expectations and vapourises them with a product so sublime you'll tell your grandkids about it."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar North PUBLISHER: Rockstar PLAYERS: 1-16

10



RED DEAD REDEMPTION

"Bigger, badder and more epic than *GTAIV*?"

Yep. If attention to detail, vigilante violence and skinning cougars interests you in the slightest, do not miss *Red Dead Redemption*. Buy it now. You're a daisy if you do.

DEVELOPER: Rockstar San Diego PUBLISHER: Rockstar
PLAYERS: 1-16

10



ASSASSIN'S CREED II

"A far more compelling story than the revolutionary original, there's more to see and do, and more ways of dealing death than before. Ubisoft has tweaked the climbing mechanic to make it feel part puzzler, but all action."

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
PLAYERS: 1

9



MGS4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

"An incredibly layered gaming experience that is almost inexhaustible. One of the best games available on the PlayStation 3, and definitely one of the top exclusives. Buy and play this videogame now. Seriously."

DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Partners
PLAYERS: 1-16

10



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

"Easily the best PS3 exclusive to date, *Uncharted 2* combines genre-defining visuals, high adventure and cinematic intensity like nothing before. Don't miss the original either. Get both, this second."

DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog
PUBLISHER: Sony
PLAYERS: 1-12

10



GOD OF WAR III

"Easily eclipses anything out there and reclaims it's rightful place at the pinnacle of its genre. Believe the hyperbole. *God of War III* deserves an honoured place – both in your own personal collection and the mighty PlayStation Parthenon"

DEVELOPER: Santa Monica Studios PUBLISHER: Sony
PLAYERS: 1

10



HEAVY RAIN

"Kudos to Quantic Dream for continuing to evolve its unique brand of gameplay and storytelling. Compelling, different, addictive – *Heavy Rain* is all of these things. This game will appeal to gamers and non-gamers alike. We just need people to stop telling us it's a revolution."

DEVELOPER: Quantic Dream
PUBLISHER: Sony
PLAYERS: 1

8



JUST CAUSE 2

"Although there are a few technical shortcomings, *Just Cause 2* generates more fun per second than any other open-world title. So much better than the original, Avalanche has crafted one of the most exciting and entertaining open-world romps we've experienced in years."

DEVELOPER: Avalanche
PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Partners
PLAYERS: 1

9

SHOOTER



BORDERLANDS

"Borderlands starts out great and only gets better from there. It takes the best elements of RPGs and shooters and fuses them, and it's simply the most rewarding co-op to date."

DEVELOPER: Gearbox PUBLISHER: 2K PLAYERS: 1-4

9



KILLZONE 2

"Visually Killzone 2 runs through the competition like a bull in the proverbial china shop. Lucky then, that the game's design and story matches the lofty production values. Killzone 2 is the first-person shooter evolved."

DEVELOPER: Guerrilla PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-16

10

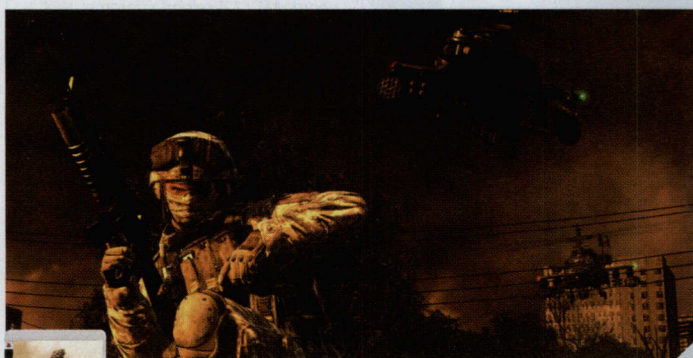


BIOSHOCK 2

"Plot-wise, this doesn't match the original. However, the combat has been spliced to near-perfection. A more than worthy sequel that should easily suck you back under for another tumble."

DEVELOPER: 2K Marin PUBLISHER: 2K PLAYERS: 1-10

9



MODERN WARFARE 2

"It's almost like three games in one, stuffed with moments that will leave you shocked and breathless with excitement. Superbly crafted, MW2 is, with its older brother, a pinnacle of this generation's games."

DEVELOPER: Infinity Ward PUBLISHER: Activision PLAYERS: 1-18

10



IL-2 STURMOVIK: BIRDS OF PREY

"It's not an FPS, but shooting is all you do – in the skies above Europe. Head-turning attention to detail and intense action. Awesome, actually."

DEVELOPER: Gaijin Entertainment PUBLISHER: AIE PLAYERS: 1-16

9



ALIENS VS PREDATOR

"Possibly the greatest movie-inspired game ever. This positively oozes atmosphere and is a must for the fans. Wonderfully visualised, incredibly immersive and true to its inspiration."

DEVELOPER: Rebellion PUBLISHER: Sega PLAYERS: 1-4

9



BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2

"In almost every way Bad Company 2 technically outclasses the original, but that's to be expected. We just miss the mischief. But maybe that's just us. Even still, this is a top-tier shooter that's more than up to the task of standing side-by-side with MW2."

DEVELOPER: DICE PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-24

8



GHOST-BUSTERS

"Well-honed and accessible controls, some spectacular visual effects, excellent pace, great level design, incredible attention to detail – all of these essential traits combined with the Ghostbusters universe and come together for a thoroughly addictive experience."

DEVELOPER: Terminal Reality PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-4

9



MAG

"You will need to put some hours in before you get to unlock the best goodies, and it's the kind of game that requires fairly frequent attention, but the pay off is one of the singularly most compelling and captivating shooters to date."

DEVELOPER: Zipper Interactive PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-256

9

TOP 5 UGLY CARS THAT BETTER NOT BE IN GT5



PONTIAC AZTEK

Named by Time as the 34th worst invention of all time, the Pontiac Aztek was the answer to a question that nobody was asking. The question everyone started asking was why does it look like there's another car trying to force its way out of the bonnet?



SSANGYONG STAVIC

The well-qualified man who designed this car wanted to capture the essence of a luxury yacht. What he got was a beached whale with a hastily applied annex on its arse. We'd love to toss them all into the ocean and see if they float.



MITSUOKA OROCHI

Mitsuoka mostly converts existing cars into models that resemble 1960s British vehicles. The Orochi, as you can tell, is an original. It's named after an eight-headed Japanese dragon so we don't know why they gave it the face of a punched fish.



FIAT MULTIPLA

Studies have shown that humans generally like cars with angry faces thanks to a phenomenon called pareidolia. That's why this misshapen mess of a car, with its gleeful cartoon expression and stupid bonnet muffin top, is so horrifying.



ASTON MARTIN LAGONDA

Hey, check it out. A hearse you wouldn't want to be seen dead in. Described as an extreme interpretation of the 1970s "folded paper" style the Lagonda, with its giant hood you could build a medium-sized palace on, still divides car nuts.

THE BEST PSP GAMES

Small system. Big games.

GTA: VICE CITY

DEVELOPER:

Rockstar Leeds

PUBLISHER:

Rockstar

PLAYERS:

1

This is about as remarkable as gaming gets on a handheld console. A fully-fledged 3D GTA, on PSP. Also? Phil Collins is in it.



MH: FREEDOM

DEVELOPER:

Capcom

PUBLISHER:

THQ

PLAYERS:

1-4

Monster Hunter is a system seller in native Japan, and it deserves that accolade here. It's an adventure game to lose your life to, and rewards in spades if you're able to put the effort in.



WIPEOUT

PULSE

DEVELOPER:

SCE

Liverpool

PUBLISHER:

Sony

PLAYERS:

1-8

Beautiful, and weighted just right, it's a futurist's dream. Depending on which day of the week you ask us this just pips *Burnout Legends* for best PSP racing game.



GTA:

CHINATOWN

WARS

DEVELOPER:

Rockstar Leeds

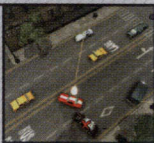
PUBLISHER:

Rockstar

PLAYERS:

1

Hilarious. Violent. Addictive. Yes, it's a port of a DS title, but it's a port done right, and still it rebels against the style of other GTA games. A tightly scripted, mature and entertaining package.



METAL GEAR

SOLID: PEACE

WALKER

DEVELOPER:

Kojima Productions

PUBLISHER:

Mindscape

PLAYERS:

1-6

Polished, well-produced and thought-out, this is a must-have. The story's great and the action's addictive. Buy this game immediately, and a PSP if you must. This is a title no gamer should miss.



GOD OF WAR:

CHAINS OF

OLYMPUS

DEVELOPER:

Ready at Dawn

PUBLISHER:

Sony

PLAYERS:

1

With fantastic graphics and tighter-than-hades gameplay, being shrunk to PSP size hasn't made this series any less epic.



RACING



PURE

"Pure shot straight from nowhere to rub *MotorStorm*'s face in its glorious graphics and watertight gameplay. It's not as varied as its main competitor, but damn does it play well."

DEVELOPER: Black Rock PUBLISHER: Madman PLAYERS: 1-16

9



GRAN TURISMO 5: PROLOGUE

"An anemic game package that somehow survives by being what is quite possibly the greatest example of audio-visual excellence on the PlayStation 3 thus far. Well worth checking out."

DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-16

8



SPLIT/SECOND

"Split/Second hasn't usurped the arcade racing king (see: the *Burnout* games), but this series debut signals it as a more than worthy adversary. There are plenty of tricks here to tempt you away from *Burnout Paradise*."

DEVELOPER: Black Rock Studios PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-8

8



COLIN MCRÆ: DIRT

"Dirt 2 is snazzy, but it's too boneheaded for its own good, has few real rally cars and very little proper rallying. The original *DIRT* remains a far better example of a next gen rally game. More varied and far less US-centric."

DEVELOPER: Codemasters PUBLISHER: Namco Bando Partners PLAYERS: 1-16

9



RACE DRIVER GRID

"This bastard rock n' roll son of V8 Supercars and *Colin McRae: Dirt* is hot. Your lower jaw will relax. Your eyelids will take five. And you'll start to drool. Shame it ditched its roots though, and the V8 DLC Codies promised has vanished."

DEVELOPER: Codemasters PUBLISHER: Namco Bando Partners PLAYERS: 1-12

9



NEED FOR SPEED SHIFT

"SHIFT bucks the trend of all-American games, and treats you as an intelligent racer. Whether you want to get under the bonnet and tinker, or even just race with what you're given, this truly is a must-have package. It's also damn pretty and very, very noisy."

DEVELOPER: Black Box PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-8

9



MOTORSTORM

"In our humble opinion *MotorStorm* was the best launch title on the fledgling PS3 – and arguably it's one of the greatest launch titles of all time. Defining next-gen racing as a platform upon which smart AI and terrain deformation could thrive, *MotorStorm* reinvented the arcade racer."

DEVELOPER: Evolution Studios PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-16

10



MIDNIGHT CLUB: LOS ANGELES

"Within its niche sub-genre, *MC: LA* reigns supreme. Well designed, rolling objectives, and an insane amount of customisation, *MC: LA* manages to rise above the rabble, easily beating off *Need for Speed Undercover* at its own game."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar San Diego PUBLISHER: Rockstar PLAYERS: 1-16

7



BURNOUT PARADISE

"You'll lament the thoughtless removal of splitscreen and the lack of a retry button, but you'll marvel at the slick frame rate, the sun drenched city, and Criterion's stellar commitment to free downloadable content. Awesome."

DEVELOPER: Criterion PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-16

9

MUSIC & SPORTS



ROCK BAND 2

"Rock Band 2 is the best music game around. Import Rock Band and LEGO Rock Band to your hard drive, access the DLC, and you'll have over 1000 songs at your fingertips. You can't fault it."

DEVELOPER: Harmonix PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-8

10



THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND

"From the tunes to screaming hordes of women to psychedelic trips through acid-fuelled imaginations, Harmonix nailed it all. A landmark collaboration."

DEVELOPER: Harmonix
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-4

9

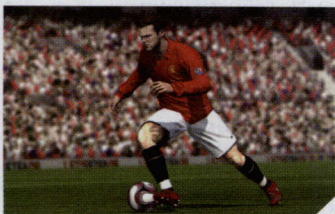


SKATE 2

"Despite some frame rate issues, SKATE 2 is undoubtedly one of the greatest sports games ever conceived. The controls are flawless, the city is dense, the balance is sublime. Massively addictive."

DEVELOPER: EA Black Box
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-8

9



FIFA 10

"With its new momentum physics, stellar visuals, and engaging gameplay, 2009 was the year that the FIFA franchise managed to leap the perennial hurdle that is Pro Evolution Soccer. FIFA 10 is even better. Buy it, become obsessed."

DEVELOPER: EA Canada
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-20

9



SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV

"With the 'vanilla' version's vibrant look, online mode and pristine gameplay but with a stack of new characters, all unlocked and at a bargain price, SSFIV belongs in everyone's collection."

DEVELOPER: Capcom PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-2

10



UFC UNDISPUTED 2010

"The new undisputed baron of sports fighting, though its improvements aren't all that radical. But while it hasn't made leaps and bounds on last year's effort, it is a straight jab in the right direction."

DEVELOPER: Yuke's
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
PLAYERS: 1-2

8



VIRTUA TENNIS 2009

"More of a tweak than a brand new experience, Virtua Tennis 2009 is still the most enjoyable tennis game available today. Along with player creation tools, the biggest plus is the chance to play in the Davis Cup."

DEVELOPER: Sumo
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA
PLAYERS: 1-4

8



GUITAR HERO METALLICA

"Guitar Hero Metallica improves upon GHWT in a number of ways – a more user-friendly HUD, superior presentation and more attention to detail. Great tracklist too, including 'Tuesday's Gone' by Lynyrd Skynyrd."

DEVELOPER: Neversoft
DISTRIBUTOR: Activision
PLAYERS: 1-4

8



DJ HERO

"A real surprise package, and tough to write off as a gimmick once you've played it. Utterly addictive, and great value when you consider it's chock full of great mixes you'll never hear anywhere else. An excellent game, and great for parties."

DEVELOPER: Freestyle Games
DISTRIBUTOR: Activision
PLAYERS: 1-2

9

MAGIC MOMENTS

METAL GEAR SOLID 4

CONSOLE: PlayStation 3 YEAR: 2008



THE MOMENT:

Haven't finished *Metal Gear Solid 4*? You're missing out. Plus, spoiler alert. The ending of the game is deceptive: just when you thought the game was over, you wake up to find Liquid standing over the top of you. What takes place from then is one of the most incredible scenes in video game history. You finally get to take on Liquid with your bare hands.

Half cut-scene, half gameplay, you hit out, punch-for-punch, as you slowly show Liquid who is the better clone. The music's emotionally engaging and the cinematics are incredible as Liquid and Snake face off and inject one another with the syringe to keep fighting.

After the five-minute intro you fight it out *Tekken*-style. The controls are fairly simple: **△** to punch, **□** to throw and grapple. Kojima's *Metal Gear* games always promoted human drama and, while they dabbled in science fiction, the core of was always about a person's struggle – physically, mentally and emotionally. Seeing the fatigue set in added to the drama, the fight deteriorating from fast-paced action into a slow slugfest as they both slowly lost their energy. The setting's perfect too – on top of a ship called Outer Heaven, in the middle of the ocean with the sun setting in the background.

After all the crap Liquid puts you through it felt good to get those punches in – not only because it was great pay-back but because every hit felt like you were landing that blow. It truly is an epic experience.



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ALL THE GAMES THAT MATTER

THE BEST PSone GAMES

on PlayStation®Store

FINAL FANTASY VII
DEVELOPER:
Square
PLAYERS: 1



The RPG upon which all other RPGs are generally judged, *Final Fantasy VII* is a modern classic and a worthy part of any credible videogame library.

DRIVER
DEVELOPER:
Reflections Interactive
(now Ubisoft Reflections)
PLAYERS: 1



The original *Driver* hit PlayStation like a blast of fresh air. Hectic, powerslide-heavy car chases through 3D cities may be old hat now, but when *Driver* debuted it was the first of its kind. Essential.

CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED
DEVELOPER:
Naughty Dog
PLAYERS: 1



Crash Bandicoot 3 remains the best pure platformer on a PlayStation console. The *Jak & Daxter* series is unmatched but, as far as old-school run 'n' jump action in purpose-built levels goes, *this* is the zenith.

MEDIEVIL
DEVELOPER: SCE
Studio Cambridge
PLAYERS: 1



It confounds us that the *MediEvil* series has been buried. It was brilliant. Fantasy hack 'n' slash adventure with a sprinkling of the supernatural, *MediEvil* still does it better than many that have come since.

SYPHON FILTER
DEVELOPER:
Eidetic (now Sony Bend)
PLAYERS: 1



Speaking of confounding, where the hell is *Syphon Filter*? We challenge you to play through the original again and tell us *Syphon Filter* doesn't deserve a PS3 comeback!

CRASH TEAM RACING
DEVELOPER:
Naughty Dog
PLAYERS: 1-4



This is kart racing at its finest. *ModNation Racers* is a lot of things – but even *ModNation Racers* doesn't boast the simply brilliant range of tracks that *CTR* does. Must own.

QUICK LIST

- 3D Dot Game Heroes** From Software 7
If you pine for the past this should keep you entertained.
- 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa** EA Canada 7
Blissful, *FIFA 10* football with a World Cup facelift. A bit pricey.
- 50 Cent: Blood on the Sand** Swordfish Studios 7
So dumb it's dangerously good. Better than it sounds.
- AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack** Harmonix 7
Bare-bones stuff, but the music is worth it. Fully exportable.
- Aliens vs. Predator** Rebellion Developments 9
Possibly the best movie-inspired title ever. Beyond brutal.
- Alone in the Dark: Inferno** Eden Studios 6
Post-*Dead Space* this just doesn't cut the mustard. At all.
- Alpha Protocol** Obsidian Entertainment 5
Great concept, poor execution. Also? Worst male lead ever.
- Army of Two** EA Montreal 7
Solid co-op thrills make up for its wasted potential.
- Army of Two: The 40th Day** EA Montreal 7
Still dumb, but a lot tighter and more fun than the first.
- Ashes Cricket 2009** Transmission Games 6
Disappointing, but stick through the ugly for multiplayer beauty.
- Assassin's Creed** Ubisoft Montreal 10
A landmark. Dated now, but was truly awe-inspiring at the time.
- Assassin's Creed II** Ubisoft Montreal 9
When everything gets correctly it casually murders its predecessor.
- Avatar** Ubisoft Montreal 7
If you've got a 3D TV, buy it. If not, it's too derivative to bother.
- Backbreaker** NaturalMotion 7
Great tech. Worth a look to see euphoria at work in sports.
- Baja: Edge of Control 2XL** Games 6
A little bland, but brilliant handling and sound.
- Band Hero** Neversoft 7
Robust, but the over-zealous censorship grates a lot.
- Batman: Arkham Asylum** Rocksteady Studios 8
Really delivers the goods. Best Batman game ever.
- Battle Fantasia** Arc System Works 7
A nice curiosity, but seriously, get *Super Street Fighter IV*.
- Battlefield: Bad Company** Digital Illusions CE 8
Destructible environments and humour. Together at last.
- Battlefield: Bad Company 2** Digital Illusions CE 8
A top tier shooter, but the single-player mischief is M.I.A.
- Bayonetta** Platinum Games 9
It takes balls to make a game this violent, sexy and weird.
- The Beatles: Rock Band** Harmonix 9
Outstanding. This is a tribute like no other.
- Beijing 2008 Eurocom** 5
Not the worst of its type, but far from a game to buy and keep.
- Bionic Commando** GRIN 7
There are some great moments, but they're few and far between.
- BioShock** Irrational Games / 2K Marin 8
14 months too late, but this is grown-up gaming at its best.
- BioShock 2** 2K Marin / Digital Extremes / 2K Australia 9
Doesn't match the original's plot but the combat is fantastic.
- BlackStix: Area 51** Midway Studios Austin 5
A pedestrian shooter that needed more time in the lab.
- BlaZBlue: Calamity Trigger** Arc System Works 8
Wild, wackier and noisier than anything else on PS3.
- Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII** Ubisoft Romania 7
A simple aerial blaster. Flawed but fun.
- Blazing Angels 2: Secret Missions of WWII** Ubisoft Romania 6
Solid, varied, but not quite the ace of aces.
- Blur** Bizarre Creations 7
A race to power-ups rather than a racer with power-ups.
- Borderlands** Gearbox Software 9
A sprawling galactic adventure. An absolute ripper.
- The Bourne Conspiracy** High Moon Studios 7
Great presentation and vibe, samey action. Stylish, superficial.
- Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway** Gearbox Software 8
The most authentic WWII shooter ever made.
- Brütal Legend** Double Fine Productions 9
Must play. If God gave rock 'n' roll to us: Tim Schafer is God.
- Burnout Paradise** Criterion Games 9
Stunning and sharp, but we miss the dedicated Crash Mode.
- Call of Duty 3** Treyarch 7
Solid but surprisingly unspectacular. Seems rushed.
- Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare** Infinity Ward 10
Relentlessly exciting. You'd be insane or a glib man to miss it.
- Modern Warfare 2** Infinity Ward 10
Categorically the best shooter of the decade.
- Call of Duty: World at War** Treyarch 10
A class act. War at its worst (and best). Plus, Nazi Zombies.
- Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood** Techland 7
A cinematic and action-packed Western shooter.

- The Chronicles of Riddick: Assault on Dark Athena** Starbreeze Studios / Tigon Studios 8
Moody and fresh. A must play.
- Civilization Revolution** Firaxis Games 8
Not for everyone, but great fun and shockingly addictive.
- Clash of the Titans** Game Republic 4
A piss-poor action game lacking in every way.
- The Club** Bizarre Creations 8
Original, compulsive and fun.
- Colin McRae: DIRT** Codemasters 9
Plenty of real rally action, unlike its sequel.
- Colin McRae: DIRT 2** Codemasters 7
Flashy and drives fine, but it's style over substance here.
- Conan** Nihilistic Software 7
A buldog of bloodletting, savage adventure and boobies.
- Condemned 2: Bloodshot** Monolith Productions 9
Gripping stuff. We were blown away.
- Conflict: Denied Ops** Pivotal Games 10
A real surprise package, and tough to write off as a gimmick.
- Cross Edge** Compile Heart 3
Every benchmark of excellence has been missed. Offensive.
- Damnation** Blue Omega Entertainment 3
Uninspired level design, broken gameplay. Avoid.
- Dante's Inferno** Visceral Games 8
Derivative and simple, but well-produced and very playable.
- Dark Sector** Digital Extremes 7
Solid but hardly perfect.
- Dark Void** Airtight Games 6
Unimpressive graphics, lacklustre sound and dull, dull combat.
- The Darkness** Starbreeze Studios 9
Stunning, original and gory as hell.
- Darksiders** Vigil Games 8
It'll test your patience but persevere and your satisfaction will swell.
- Dead Space** EA Redwood Shores 9
Super tense. The future of survival horror.
- Dead to Rights: Retribution** Volatile Games 6
Fine, but doesn't do enough to stand out. Needs more dog.
- Def Jam: Icon** EA Chicago 8
Pretty and highly kinetic. A bit cumbersome though.
- Demon's Souls** From Software 7
Those looking for an extreme challenge may have met their match.
- Devil May Cry 4** Capcom 7
Memorable bosses, but too much backtracking spoils things.
- DJ Hero** FreeStyleGames 9
A real surprise package, and tough to write off as a gimmick.
- Dragon Age: Origins** BioWare 9
As long as it is enthralling. Essential for patient fantasy freaks.
- Eat Lead: The Return of Matt Hazard** Vicious Cycle Software 6
Great concept and nice parody, but basic one-play stuff.
- The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion** Bethesda Game Studios 10
Simply put: awesome.
- EyePet** SCE London Studio 7
Harmless but pointless for adults; kids are the only ones for this.
- F.E.A.R.** Monolith Productions / Day 1 Studios 8
A chilling ride, but the graphics could've been sharper.
- F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin** Monolith Productions 7
An above-average shooter suffering from a lack of imagination.
- FaceBreaker** EA Canada 7
Great look, but very unbalanced.
- Fairytale Fights** Playlogic Game Factory 7
Quirky and sadistic, but too simplistic for engaging solo play.
- Fallout 3** Bethesda Game Studios 9
There's nothing else like it. A flawed masterpiece for the ages.
- Far Cry 2** Ubisoft Montreal 8
A technical open-world bell-ringer, but the travel time will grate.
- Ferrari Challenge** Eutechnyx 7
Serious and robust but it won't trouble *Gran Turismo 5*.
- FIFA 10** EA Canada 5
Buy it. Become obsessed. The best sports game available.
- Fight Night Round 4** EA Canada 9
Runs like a dream. Technical and strategic.
- Final Fantasy XIII** Square Enix 8
Spellbinding graphics and 50+ hours of action.
- Folklore** Game Republic 8
Original and surprising with moments of genius.
- Formula One Championship Edition** SCE Studio Liverpool 9
Looks great, plays great. Good enough to last until *F1 2010*.
- Fracture** Day 1 Studios 7
Altering terrain is a neat twist, but overall it left us wanting.
- Fuel** Asobo Studios 4
Huge, but buggy, boring and undercooked.
- Full Auto 2: Battlines** Pseudo Interactive 7
Fun but shallow. You'd take *Split/Second* instead these days.
- Genji: Days of the Blade** Game Republic 5
Flashy graphics, giant enemy crabs, piss-poor plodding gameplay.
- Ghostbusters: The Video Game** Terminal Reality / Threewave Software 9
Robust, charming and impeccably presented. Fantastic fun.
- The Godfather: The Don's Edition** EA Redwood Shores 6
It made a good PS2 game, but skip this port.
- The Godfather II** EA Redwood Shores 6
Starts as a decent crime caper, but alienates fans of the film.
- God of War III** SCE Santa Monica Studio 10
A showcase. Old-fashioned arse-kicking, astonishing visuals.
- God of War Collection** SCE Santa Monica Studio / Bluepoint Games 9
Age has not diminished its impact. Purchase immediately.
- Golden Axe: Beast Rider** Secret Level 4
Destined for the chopping block. No co-op? Boo!
- Gran Turismo 5 Prologue** Polyphony Digital 8
An appetising taster, but not the full course.
- Grand Theft Auto IV** Rockstar North 10
The technical scope and scale of *GTAIV* dwarfs all. Remarkable.
- Grand Theft Auto: Episodes From Liberty City** Rockstar North 9
An essential, and often superior, companion to *GTAIV*.
- Green Day: Rock Band** Harmonix 8
Very good. Up there with *The Beatles: RB* and *GH: Metallica*.
- Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock** Neversoft 9
The last *GH* with a mostly decent soundtrack.
- Guitar Hero World Tour** Neversoft 9
Good, but missing crucial elements that make *Rock Band* better.
- Guitar Hero 5** Neversoft 7
Improving, but the tracklist is clearly half paid for by record suits.
- Guitar Hero: Aerosmith** Neversoft 6
Dated, and weak compared to the likes of *GH: Metallica*.
- Guitar Hero: Metallica** Neversoft 8
The best *Guitar Hero* game since *Guitar Hero III*.
- Guitar Hero: Greatest Hits** Beenox 7
Great past *GH* tracks with full band support. Why wasn't it DLC?
- Guitar Hero: Van Halen** Underground Development 6
Only buy this cheap: \$90 is an insult. USA *GH5* buyers got it free.
- Hail to the Chimp** Wideload Games 3
Not funny, or enjoyable. Want to lose friends? Play this with them.
- Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince** EA Bright Light Studio 6
Play the first 30 minutes and you've played the whole game.
- Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix** EA UK 6
The chore-like structure will probably bore most.
- Haze** Free Radical Design 6
A flop. Patchy visuals, apostate level design and dismal AI.
- Heavenly Sword** Ninja Theory 9
Slick graphics and refined combat. A bit short though.
- Heavy Rain** Quantic Dream 8
Not quite a revolution, but clever and well-crafted.
- Hellboy: The Science of Evil** Krome Studios 6
Sluggish and generic. Ordinary on all counts.
- Heroes Over Europe** Transmission Games 7
A little rough, but not bad. *IL-2* is much better though.
- IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey** Gaijin Entertainment 8
Head-turning attention to detail. Best flight game on PS3.
- InFamous** Sucker Punch Productions 9
A superpowered take on the urban crime-fighting sandbox.
- Iron Man** Secret Level 3
Filled to the brim with bugs. Totally substandard.
- John Woo Presents: Stranglehold** Midway Chicago 7
Won't set the world on fire, but packs frantic *Max Payne*-lite fun.
- Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights** Juice Games 7
Stout mechanics, glossy options. Not too deep though.
- Just Cause 2** Avalanche Studios 9
Grappling hooks, parachutes, stripper zeppelins. Buy this game.
- Kane & Lynch: Dead Men** IO Interactive 6
A let down. Gets close to greatness before crashing back down.
- Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days** IO Interactive 7
Michael Mann/YouTube visuals? Great. The game? Average.
- Katamari Forever** Namco Bandai 8
Joyfulness, digitally realised. Infectious.
- Killzone 2** Guerrilla Games 10
Lives up to the hype. Amazing graphics, hectic action.
- The King of Fighters XII** SNK Playmore 3
Grey, old and well beyond retirement. Irredeemable.
- Lair** Factor 5 5
It feels rushed and unfinished. Deeply disappointing.
- Legendary Spark Unlimited** 4
A rushed mess. Terrible.
- LEGO Batman** Traveller's Tales 7
Sound and faithful, but the formula is getting old.
- LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4** Traveller's Tales 7
Arguably the most thorough LEGO universe yet.
- LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original** 9
Happiness and wonder overcome us with this joyous adaptation.
- LEGO Rock Band** Harmonix / Traveller's Tales 8
Cute. Fewer tracks than we'd like, but you can export the lot.

Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust Team17 Software 1
An amazing new low for this generation. Worst game ever? Maybe.

ESSENTIAL LittleBigPlanet Media Molecule 10
Innovative and never-ending. It's time to hit the sack!

Lost Planet: Extreme Condition Capcom / K2 LLC 6
A half-arsed port you'd never bother with at this point.

Lost Planet 2 Capcom 7
Slim pickings for solo players but multiplayer buffs may dig it.

Lost: Via Domus Ubisoft Montreal 6
Some solid adventuring, but the voice acting is rubbish.

RECOMMENDED Mafia 2 2K Czech 8
Its attention to detail, presentation and sound is to be admired.

RECOMMENDED MAG Zipper Interactive 9
Shooter junkies take heed, this is where it's at for online combat.

Marvel: Ultimate Alliance Raven Software 9
Colourful, action-packed, co-op dungeon crawling.

Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2 Vicarious Visions 7
A compelling romp, but the button-mashing play needs updating.

Medal of Honor: Airborne EA Los Angeles 6
Short and lacks much true innovation. Too many problems.

RECOMMENDED Mercenaries 2: World in Flames Pandemic Studios 8
Weak in many areas, but has fun in spades.

ESSENTIAL Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots Kojima Productions 10
Insane productions values. A titan amongst games.

RECOMMENDED Midnight Club: Los Angeles Rockstar San Diego 7
Visually weak at times. Great customisation and seamless racing.

RECOMMENDED Mirror's Edge EA Digital Illusions CE 8
A true original that makes some grand leaps in design.

Mobile Suit Gundam: Target in Sight Namco Bandai Games 3
A rubber Godzilla of a title. What a pipe blocker!

RECOMMENDED ModNation Racers United Front Games 9
An incredible package. Creating is even more fun than racing!

Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe Midway Games 7
A fun game with mass appeal, but not very technical.

MotoGP 09/10 Monumental Games 6
Simulation freaks will want to veer well away.

RECOMMENDED MotorStorm Evolution Studios 10
Fast, hard and dirty. In 2007, it was everything game should be.

MotorStorm: Pacific Rift Evolution Studios 8
Boasts split-screen, but visually it hasn't come on far enough.

MX vs. ATV: Untamed Rainbow Studios 7
Feels like a PS2 port with no next gen goodness.

MX vs. ATV Reflex Rainbow Studios 7
Motocross freaks will love it. Needed a little more zest though.

RECOMMENDED NBA 2K10 Visual Concepts / Kush Games 8
Excellent, broadcast-level presentation. The FIFA 10 of basketball.

NBA Live 10 EA Canada 8
Nearly as good as NBA 2K10, but you don't need them both.

NBA Street: Homecourt EA Canada 8
Brash, addictive arcade basketball. Instant fun.

Need for Speed: Carbon EA Black Box 8
A bit more Paul Walker than Vin Diesel, but solid.

RECOMMENDED Need for Speed: SHIFT Slightly Mad Studios 9
Superbly presented and a blast to play. Feels fast.

Need for Speed: Undercover EA Black Box 5
Technically faulty, and adds nothing good since *Most Wanted*.

Nier Cavia Unreleased 7
Decent enough, but there are richer experiences elsewhere.

RECOMMENDED Ninja Gaiden Sigma Team Ninja 8
A treasure trove of gaming goodness. And violence.

Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Team Ninja 8
A sexy and rock hard title, but the gore's been cut.

Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising Codemasters 8
Authentic but niche. Very unforgiving.

RECOMMENDED The Orange Box EA UK / Valve Corporation 9
Portal is worth virtually any asking price alone.

Overlord: Raising Hell 4J Studios / Triumph Studios 7
A bundle of fun, mixing tactics with a juvenile love of chaos.

Overlord II Triumph Studios 8
Refined gameplay and more jokes, but control quirks persist.

RECOMMENDED PES 2010: Pro Evolution Soccer Konami 9
Improvements are welcomed, but still not as classy as FIFA 10.

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End Eurocom 6
Looks the part, but doesn't feel or play the part.

Planet 51 Pyro Studios 5
Like a dry cracker for dinner. Bland and boring, and no fun.

RECOMMENDED Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands Ubisoft Montreal 8
Worth your time, but better swordplay could've really helped.

Prison Break ZooTfly 4
A below-average stealth game cobbled together on the cheap.

RECOMMENDED Prototype Radical Entertainment 8
A simple superhero kill-fest, but a truckload of guilty fun.

RECOMMENDED Pure Black Rock Studios 9
Still one of the best arcade racers on the market.

Quantum of Solace Treyarch 7
Nearly there, but has a few too many faults to get over the line.

RECOMMENDED Race Driver: GRID Codemasters 9
A born-to-rage racing rebel. Good, but lacks *Race Driver* vintage.

RECOMMENDED Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time Insomniac Games 9
Reinvigorates the genre without reinventing the wheel.

RECOMMENDED Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction Insomniac Games 8
A big, wild, good ol' fashioned adventure.

ESSENTIAL Red Dead Redemption Rockstar San Diego 10
This Western is bigger, badder and more violent than *GTAV*.

ESSENTIAL Red Faction: Guerrilla Volition, Inc. 9
Huge fun, and the best destruction effects ever.

RECOMMENDED Resident Evil 5 Capcom 9
A grand, bloody adventure, but the inventory system remains bad.

RECOMMENDED Resistance: Fall of Man Insomniac Games 10
A truly fantastic launch title with the best weapons around.

RECOMMENDED Resistance 2 Insomniac Games 9
Fast and furious, and stuffed with action.

Resonance of Fate tri-Ace 6
Deep, but also wordy, clunky and ugly.

RECOMMENDED Rock Band Harmonix 10
The best party game ever, until *Rock Band 2*.

ESSENTIAL Rock Band 2 Harmonix 10
The best music game around, despite MTV's poor treatment of us.

Rogue Warrior Zombie Studios / Rebellion Developments 3
A fiasco. We tried to like it, but it's too short and too terrible.

RECOMMENDED R.U.S.E. Eugen Systems 8
Massively niche but supremely well-crafted strategy.

RECOMMENDED The Saboteur Pandemic Studios 8
Charming and packed with action. Great, unique visual style.

Sacred 2: Fallen Angel Ascaron Entertainment 6
Gigantic, but feels very slapped together.

RECOMMENDED Saints Row 2 Volition, Inc. 9
Puerile, mean-spirited and technically outclassed, if you care.

SBK-X: Superbike World Championship Milestone 7
Inches in front of *MotoGP 09/10*. Purists may still hate on it.

Scene It? Bright Lights! Big Screen! A2M 5
Woefully vanilla compared to the past Xbox 360 versions.

Sega Rally Sega Racing Studio 7
Familiar, old-school arcade fun.

Shaun White Snowboarding Ubisoft Montreal 6
Lacks the fine touch of realism or the excitement of lunacy.

Silent Hill Homecoming Double Helix Games 6
New combat system is good, but lacks the cerebral chills.

The Simpsons Game EA Redwood Shores 8
Short, but the crumulent visuals embiggen the experience.

RECOMMENDED SingStar SCE London Studio 8
Will last as long as the PS3. Have you seen the DLC?

Singularity Raven Software 7
Had potential but wasn't worth the wait.

RECOMMENDED Skate EA Black Box 9
A well-balanced masterpiece and true *Tony Hawk* killer.

ESSENTIAL Skate 2 EA Black Box 9
Perfect controls, plus New San Van is the best *Skate* city yet.

RECOMMENDED Skate 3 EA Black Box 8
Better in many ways, although the city isn't as cool as *Skate 2*.

SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Confrontation Slant Six Games 6
A sturdy, dependable effort that fails to excite.

Soldier of Fortune: Payback Caudron HQ 6
Serviceable we guess, but the gore has been cut out for us.

Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing Sumo Digital 7
Fun but shallow. Copies from the best but missing crucial spark.

Sonic the Hedgehog Sonic Team 4
There are cheaper ways to get a spare Blu-ray case.

Sonic Unleashed Sonic Team 6
It's the least awful *Sonic* game in years, if that means anything.

RECOMMENDED Soulcalibur IV Namco Bandai 8
Phenomenal, but will let down those expecting a revolution.

Spider-Man: Web of Shadows Treyarch / Shaba Games 7
Swift and tidy, but not exactly deep.

RECOMMENDED Split/Second Black Rock Studio 8
Doesn't feel as sharp as *Burnout*, but it's a true challenger.

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed LucasArts 7
Plays a good game but fails to use its idea to maximum effect.

Stormrise The Creative Assembly 4
A cack-handed, future war mess. Terrible controls.

RECOMMENDED Street Fighter IV Capcom / Dimps 10
A tight-fisted gut blow of wow, but get *Super Street Fighter IV*.

RECOMMENDED Stuntman: Ignition Paradigm Entertainment 9
The vehicular equivalent of a 10-hour long orgasm.

ESSENTIAL Super Street Fighter IV Capcom / Dimps 10
Features a lion's share of new content for its price. Get it.

SuperCar Challenge Eutechnyx 7
Admirable effort, but feels a little bland despite the exotic cars.

Superstars V8: Next Challenge Milestone 9
An improvement, but it's still more shallow than it thinks it is.

RECOMMENDED Tekken 6 Namco Bandai 8
Easy to play, with the biggest roster ever. Feels a bit old, though.

Terminator Salvation GRIN / Halcyon Games 4
An abysmal failure. Short, and filled with glitches.

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09 EA Tiburon 8
Still the only golf game worth owning.

Time Crisis 4 Nex Entertainment 7
A little bipolar at times. Stick with arcade mode and enjoy.

TimeShift Saber Interactive 6
A solid attempt that doesn't quite reach 88 miles per hour.

TNA Impact! Midway Studios - Los Angeles 6
Good, arcade-style biff, but there's not enough content.

Tom Clancy's EndWar Ubisoft Shanghai 7
The console RTS is here, but it's far from a finished product.

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2 Red Storm Entertainment 7
A tense, realistic shooter. Cool gadgets.

Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. Ubisoft Romania 7
Tight and accessible, but a bit sterile.

RECOMMENDED Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2 Ubisoft Romania 8
A top gun successor. More detail, better mission design.

RECOMMENDED Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas Ubisoft Montreal 9
Slack, good-looking and utterly engaging. Smart shooting.

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas 2 Ubisoft Montreal 7
Doesn't quite feel as cool as the first one.

RECOMMENDED Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent Ubisoft Shanghai 9
Obsessive and gripping, online and off. Obtain.

Tony Hawk's Project 8 Neversoft 7
No real reason to revisit this post-*Skate* at all.

Tony Hawk's Proving Ground Neversoft 6
Bloated and inconsistent. Pass.

Tony Hawk: Ride Robomodo 4
Pure frustration made plastic. Sub-par game, ludicrous price.

Top Spin 3 PAM Development 8
Realistic tennis with a steep learning curve.

Toy Story 3 Avalanche Software 7
Cute, simple, and charming as hell. Way better than you think.

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen Luxoflux 6
A day of undemanding fun, but not much more.

Transformers: War for Cybertron High Moon 7
Fast, twitchy online multiplayer shooting. No split-screen though.

Turning Point: Fall of Liberty Spark Unlimited 4
Shesse from start to finish. Great concept, bogus execution.

Turok Propaganda Games 7
The new *Turok* packs bite but it's missing a few teeth.

UFC 2009 Undisputed Yuke's 8
A technical, rewarding fighter that looks bloody unreal.

RECOMMENDED UFC Undisputed 2010 Yuke's 8
The new undisputed baron of sports fighting.

ESSENTIAL Uncharted: Drake's Fortune Naughty Dog 10
Awesome plot, awesome graphics, awesome action. This owns.

ESSENTIAL Uncharted 2: Among Thieves Naughty Dog 10
This is the reason Hollywood is so worried about videogames.

Unreal Tournament 3 Epic Games 8
Fast, twitchy online multiplayer shooting. No split-screen though.

Valkyria Chronicles Sega WOW 8
Strategy and RPG heads alike should not miss this game.

Vancouver 2010 Eurocom 6
A handful of events that last one afternoon. Skip it.

Viking: Battle for Asgard The Creative Assembly 7
Slow attacks and weak visuals, but it has its appeal.

RECOMMENDED Virtua Fighter 5 Sega-AM2 8
As hardcore as fighting games get. Deep and balanced.

RECOMMENDED Virtua Tennis 2009 Sumo Digital 8
The top seed of tennis games made even better.

Wanted: Weapons of Fate GRIN 5
Designed only to appeal to mentally-subnormal 11-year-olds.

RECOMMENDED Warhawk Incognito Entertainment / SCE Santa Monica Studio 9
Furiously addictive. Tighter than a bull's arse on fight night.

WET A2M 8
With so much style, who needs substance? Grindhouse fare.

Wheelman Midway Studios - Newcastle / Tigon Studios 6
Rubbish low-speed handling, and underdone throughout.

White Knight Chronicles Level-5 / SCE Japan Studio 6
Doesn't feel like a worthwhile way to spend 30-or-so hours.

Wolfenstein Raven Software / id Software 7
Lacks soul but still delivers Nazi-blasting action.

WWE Legends of WrestleMania Yuke's 6
Gets by on retro charm, but feels ancient.

WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 Yuke's 8
If WWE's your thing, welcome to nirvana.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine Raven Software 7
A head slicin' chest beater of a slash 'em up. Repetitive though.

Yakuza 3 Amusement Vision 7
Certainly an aquired taste. Lots to do, but the slow pace grates.

INHOUSE

ROCKSTAR NORTH

LOCATION: EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND
FOUNDED: 1999



Success in videogame development can't be determined by or associated with a place. Movies have Hollywood, for a while in the '90s Seattle was the place to find the best music of the time. Videogame development and success is found worldwide, and one story of unlikely success comes from a Dundee-based Scottish developer, who created a pitch-perfect satire on American culture in 2008.

Rockstar North is known for developing the wildly successful *GTA III*, and the insanely popular and iconic *GTA IV*. Before that, they created history with a bunch of green-haired, blue-smocked Lemmings when they were known as DMA Design.

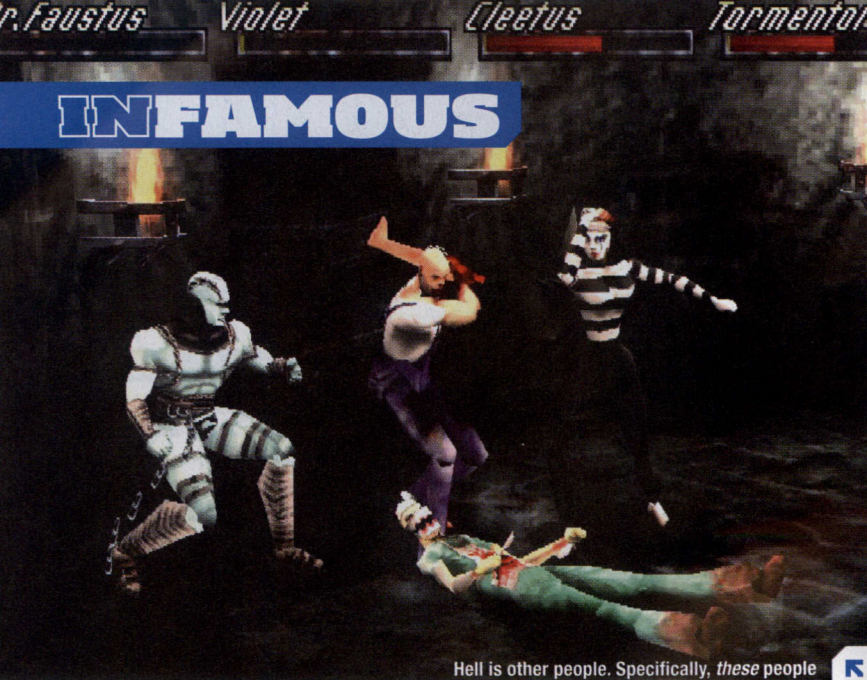
Originally on the Amiga back in 1991, *Lemmings* has been ported to dozens of systems since and is considered to be one of the most popular games of all time. DMA also made a really cool side-scrolling mech game on the Amiga, called *Walker*, in 1993.

DMA Design released *Grand Theft Auto* in 1997 on the PC (Visual Science ported the PlayStation version), and was bought by Gremlin Interactive later in the year.

However, DMA had publishing deals with BMG Interactive, and by 1999 BMG became part of NYC-based Rockstar. After *GTA III* installed itself in every PS2-owner's home in 2001, Rockstar bought DMA and re-named it Rockstar North in 2002.

The rest from there is a swathe of *GTA* games on PS2, PSP, PS3 and other systems. It's not hard to see why we hungry for the first non-*GTA* title from Rockstar North, the PS3-exclusive *Agent*.





1998 THRILL KILL

You can't spell manslaughter without 'laughter'

Behold, the real-life incarnation of The Simpsons' non-game, 'Disembowler IV' (the game where condemned people dig at each other with rusty hooks). If you're not instantly familiar with the name *Thrill Kill*, that's okay. Rather ironically, this tournament of the damned was consumed by the fires of development hell.

When EA absorbed Virgin Interactive in 1998 it they inherited *Thrill Kill*, a ninety-eight percent completed project. Sounds like a free lunch, right? Feasibly EA could release this game without paying a cent to develop or promote it and then reap in pure profit from its sale. Well, the opposite happened. EA took one look at *Thrill Kill*, made the sign of the cross and backed away, slowly.

Man, we would have loved to have been a fly on the wall when the EA execs sat down to sample their newly adopted demon child. On the surface the game sounded fairly revolutionary, a four-player fisticuffs fighting game simply hadn't been attempted at that point. Also, if the recent success of *Mortal Kombat* was anything to go by: kids + a little bit of blood-letting = money fights in the boardroom.



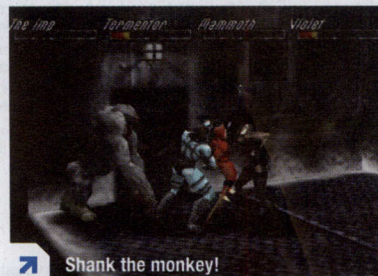
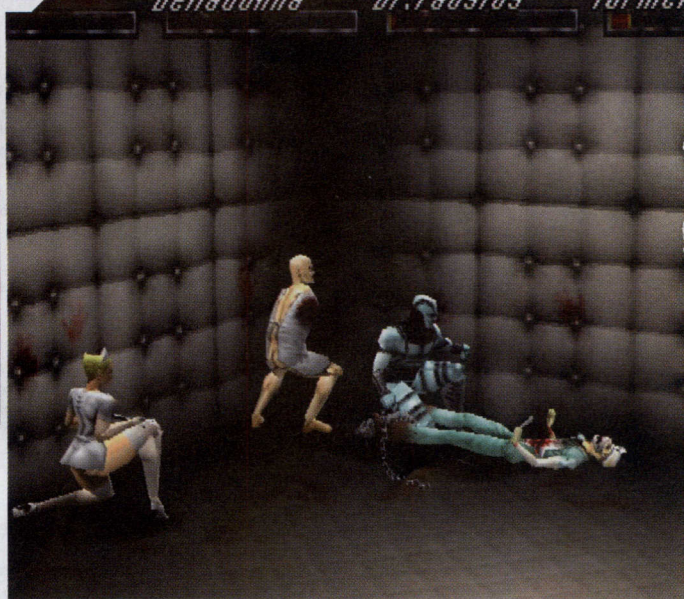
Unfortunately, the violence proved to be next-level and the game setting was nothing short of disturbing. In a nutshell (or perhaps, 'nuthouse' is a better term) the game had you selecting one of a selection of deranged deviants, wailing on three other similarly sick puppies and engorging your own personal 'blood lust' meter rose to full. Manage this, and you were given the power to one-button 'thrill kill' one of your enemies in a variety of hideous ways. Rinse and repeat until you're the last one left alive.

The miscreants on offer were colourful to say the least. You had a dominatrix maid who would take "extreme pleasure" in maiming her victims. A cannibal who used a human leg like a bat and would bite your face right off. A doctor with a bear trap grafted onto his jaw (don't ask, just accept). A hulking creature that used to be a rage-o-holic postal worker. The rest of the roster was made up with a contortionist, a pyromaniac, a sadistic torturer and a conjoint-twin midget. Pretty standard stuff, really.

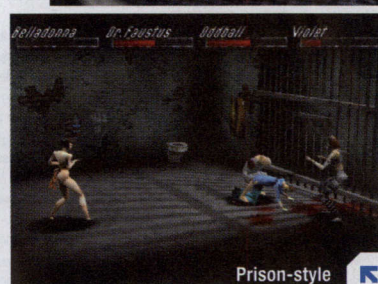
As interesting as the characters were, the action itself was very lacklustre. Despite having the illusion of technicality, *Thrill Kill* had terrible move balancing, which devolved every fight into a mashfest that was every bit as frustrating and hellish as the scenes depicted on screen. Ever played (and hated) *Wu-Tang: Taste The Pain* on the PSX? Then you already know what a match of *Thrill Kill* feels like, as both games share the same mediocre engine.

When you strip away the superfluous blood and gore, *Thrill Kill* is a me-too fighting game built upon a very shabby skeleton indeed. Don't mourn the loss of this one, it's much better off dead. **Adam Mathew**

Tormentor: Yeah, it's not just a clever name.



Shank the monkey!



Prison-style



INFO

CONSOLE:
PLAYSTATION
GENRE:
FIGHTING
DEVELOPER:
VIRGIN INTERACTIVE
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:
UK
CURRENT PRICE: N/A
APPROXIMATE PRICE: NOT RELEASED

REST IN PIECES

Much like *Mortal Kombat*'s fatalities, the titular thrill kills pushed the boundary of violence. Taking out the first two opponents let you 'normal kill' your enemies with a single button push and these usually involved some sort of decapitation. For your last victim however, you had the option to input a command that would do one of four 'extra' brutal kills.

Honestly, by today's standards, there isn't much here that would make you reach for the bucket. Most of the thrill kills are polygons getting dismembered or decapitated while red sprites drip onto the floor. Most of the poorly rendered violence is only bad via suggestion, like Belladonna shoving her cattle prod down an opponent's throat to electrocute them until they explode.

INSANE

IT SHOULD BE A GAME



Cock Rock out with:

- Poison
 - Mötley Crüe
 - Whitesnake
 - and other bands
- (where the dudes don't quite look like dudes)*

Supports:

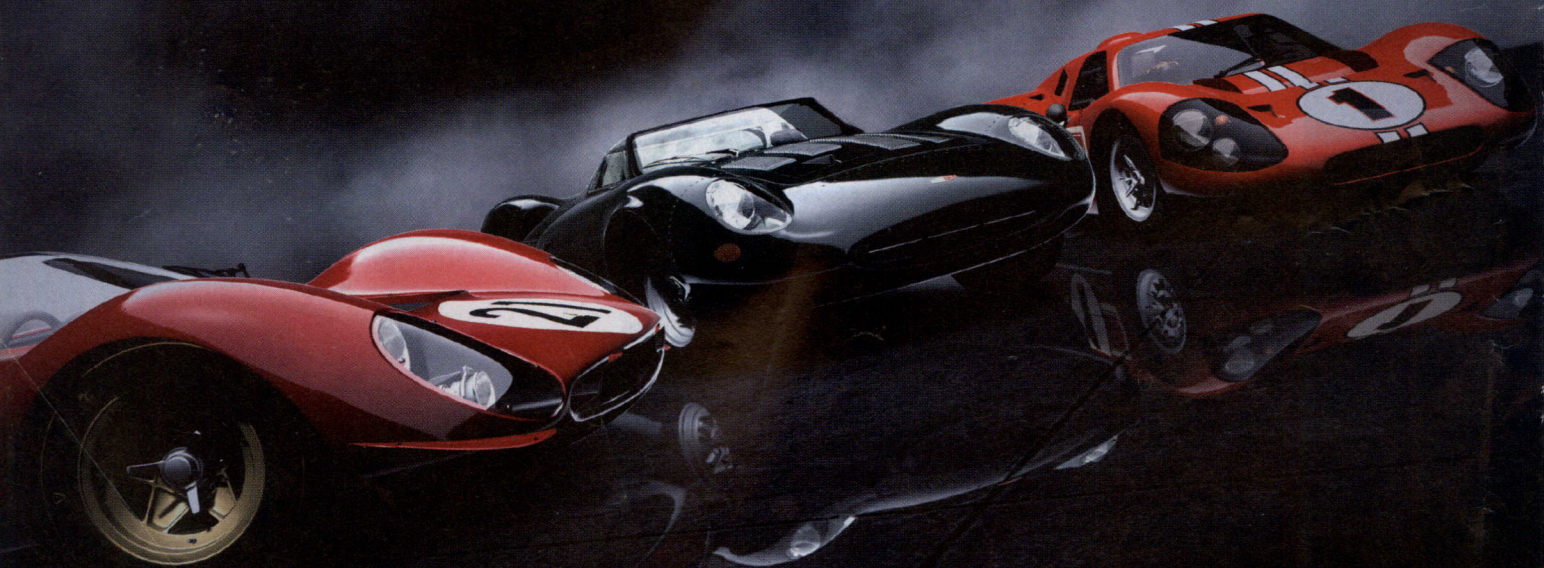
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Caution: Gaming
experience may
change online

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A high-contrast, black and white promotional image for Call of Duty: Black Ops. It features a close-up of a soldier's face, partially obscured by shadows and a tactical mask. The soldier is wearing a tactical vest and holding a handgun in each hand, pointed downwards. The background is dark and smoky.

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ACTIVISION

Check the Classification

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